

Ethnic Groups

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of Nepal and their ways of living



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and

their ways of living

by
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&
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His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev
&
Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya Rajya Lakshmi Devi Shah
of Nepal



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II showing habitations of the ethnic groups.	

Districts and Headquarters

<i>No.</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Head quarter</i>
1.	Taplejung	Taplejung
2.	Panchthar	Fidim
3.	Ilam	Ilam
4.	Jhapa	Chandragarhi
5.	Sankhuwasabha	Khandbari
6.	Tehrathum	Tehrathum
7.	Dhankuta	Dhankuta
8.	Morang	Biratnagar
9.	Sunsari	Inarwa
10.	Solukhumbu	Phaplu
11.	Bhojpur	Bhojpur
12.	Khotang	Diktel
13.	Okhaldhunga	Okhaldhunga
14.	Udayapur	Udayapurgarhi
15.	Saptari	Rajbiraj
16.	Siraha	Siraha
17.	Dolakha	Charikot
18.	Ramechhap	Ramechhap
19.	Sindhuli	Sindhuligarhi
20.	Dhanusha	Janakpur
21.	Mahotari	Jaleswar
22.	Sarlahi	Malangawa
23.	Rasuwa	Dhunche
24.	Sindhu	Chautara
25.	Nuwakot	Nuwakot
26.	Dhading	Dhading
27.	Kathmandu	Kathmandu
28.	Bhaktapur	Bhaktapur
29.	Patan	Patan
30.	Kabhre	Dhulikhel
31.	Makawanpur	Hetauda
32.	Chitawan	Bharatpur
33.	Rautahat	Gaur

34.	Bara	Kalaiya
35.	Parsa	Birgunj
36.	Manang	Bagarchap
37.	Gorkha	Gorkha
38.	Lamjung	Kunchha
39.	Kaski	Pokhara
40.	Parbat	Kusma
41.	Tanahu	Bandipur
42.	Syangja	Putalikheta
43.	Dolpa	Dunche
44.	Mustang	Jomsom
45.	Magdi	Beni
46.	Baglung	Baglung
47.	Gulmi	Tamghas
48.	Palpa	Tansen
49.	Argakhanchi	Khanchikot
50.	Nawalparasi	Parasi
51.	Rupandehi	Bhairahawa
52.	Kapilbastu	Taulihawa
53.	Rukum	Rukumkot
54.	Roipa	Liwangaon
55.	Pyuthan	Pyuthan
56.	Sallyan	Sallyan
57.	Dang-deokhuri	Ghorai
58.	Humla	Simikot
59.	Mugu	Gum
60.	Tibrikot	Kaigaon
61.	Jumla	Jumla
62.	Jajarkot	Jajarkot
63.	Dailekh	Dailekh
64.	Surkhet	Surkhet
65.	Banke	Nepalgunj
66.	Bardia	Gularia
67.	Bajhang	Jaiprithbinagar
68.	Bajura	Bajura
69.	Achham	Achham
70.	Doti	Silgarhi
71.	Kailali	Dhangarhi
72.	Darchula	Darchula
73.	Baitadi	Baitadi
74.	Dandeldhura	Dandeldhura
75.	Kanchanpur	Mahendranagar

NEPAL

ZONES AND DISTRICTS

ASIA

NEPAL

INDEX
MAP

1000 miles

LEGEND

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY

ZONAL BOUNDARY

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

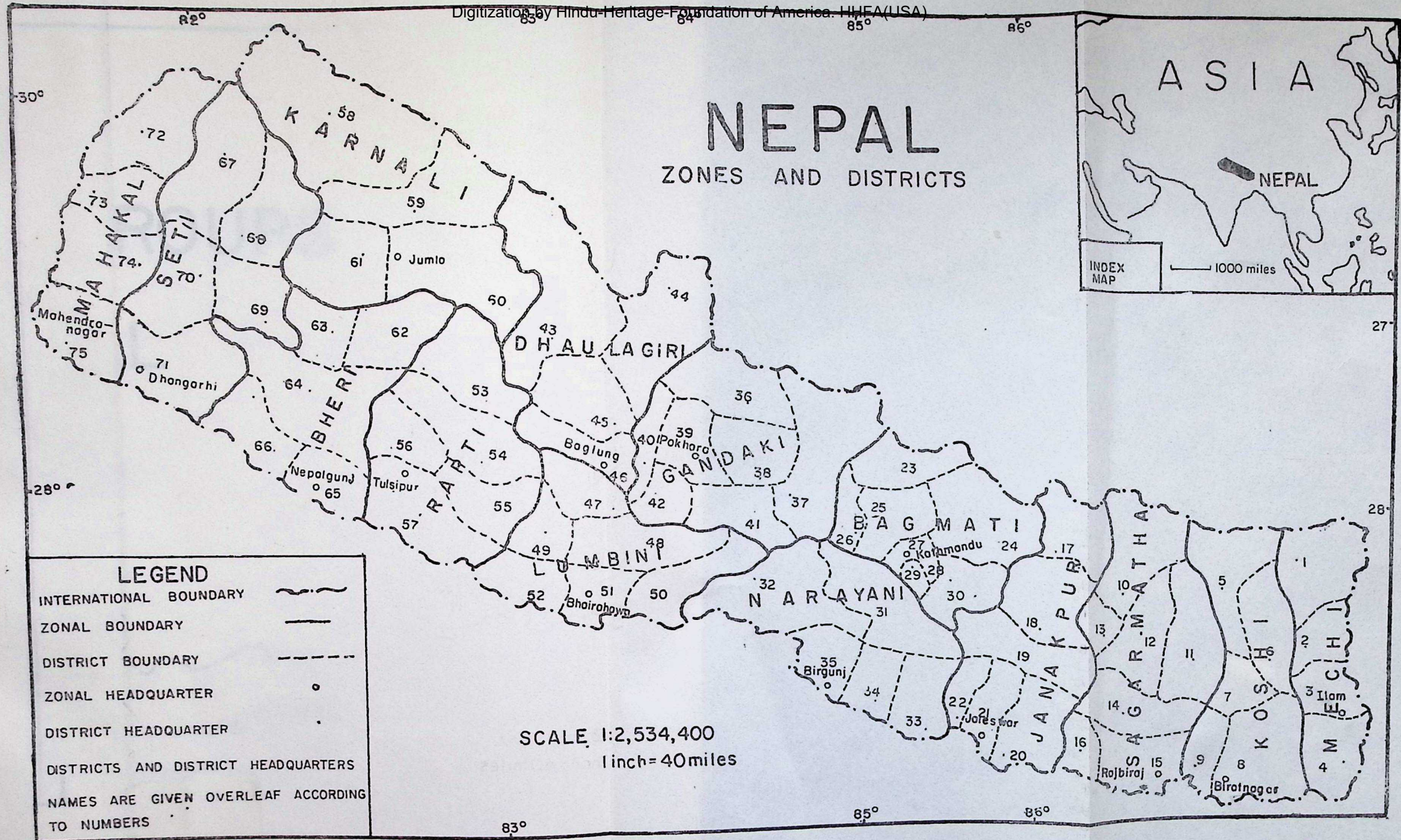
ZONAL HEADQUARTER

DISTRICT HEADQUARTER

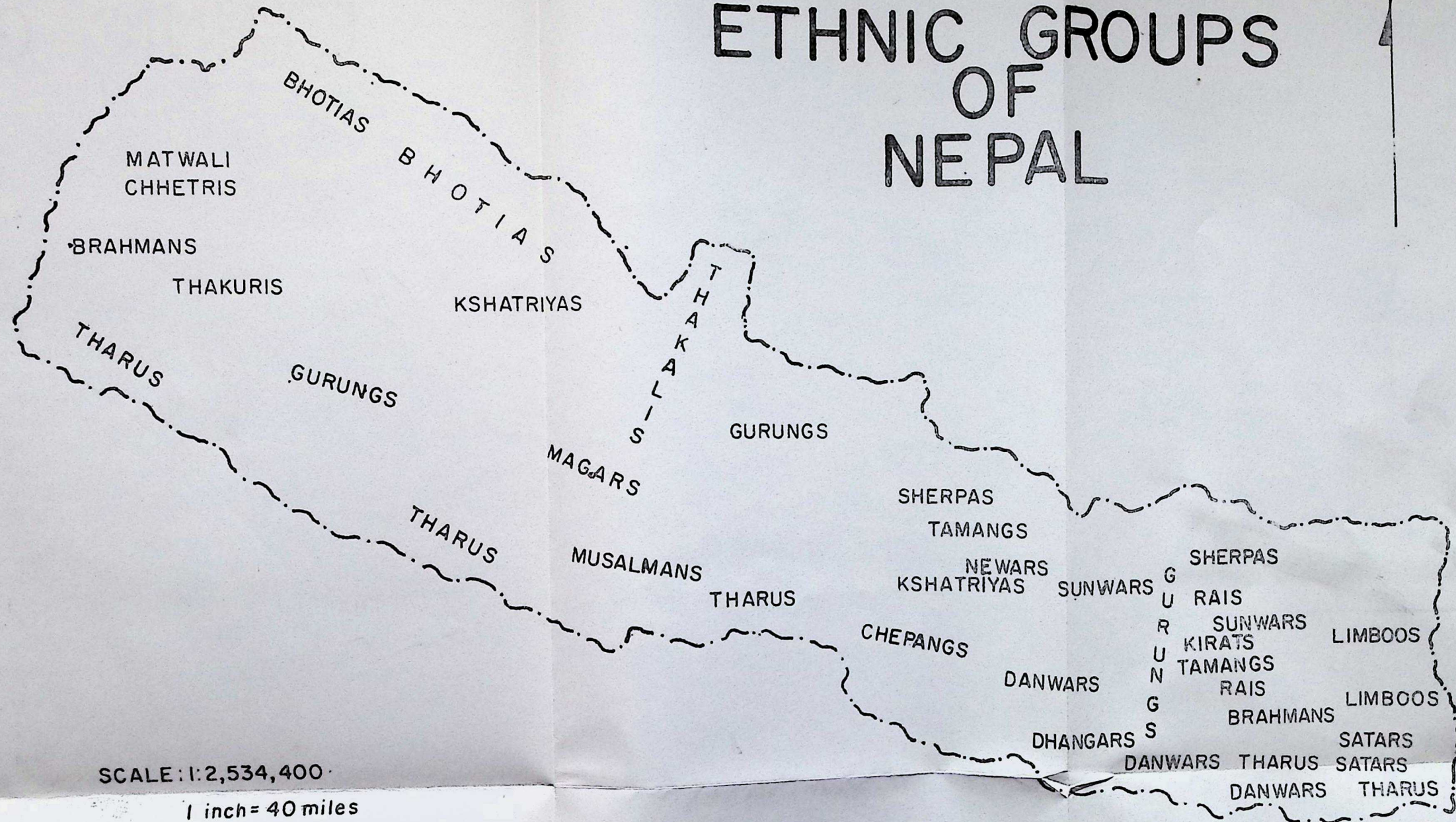
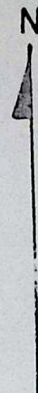
DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS

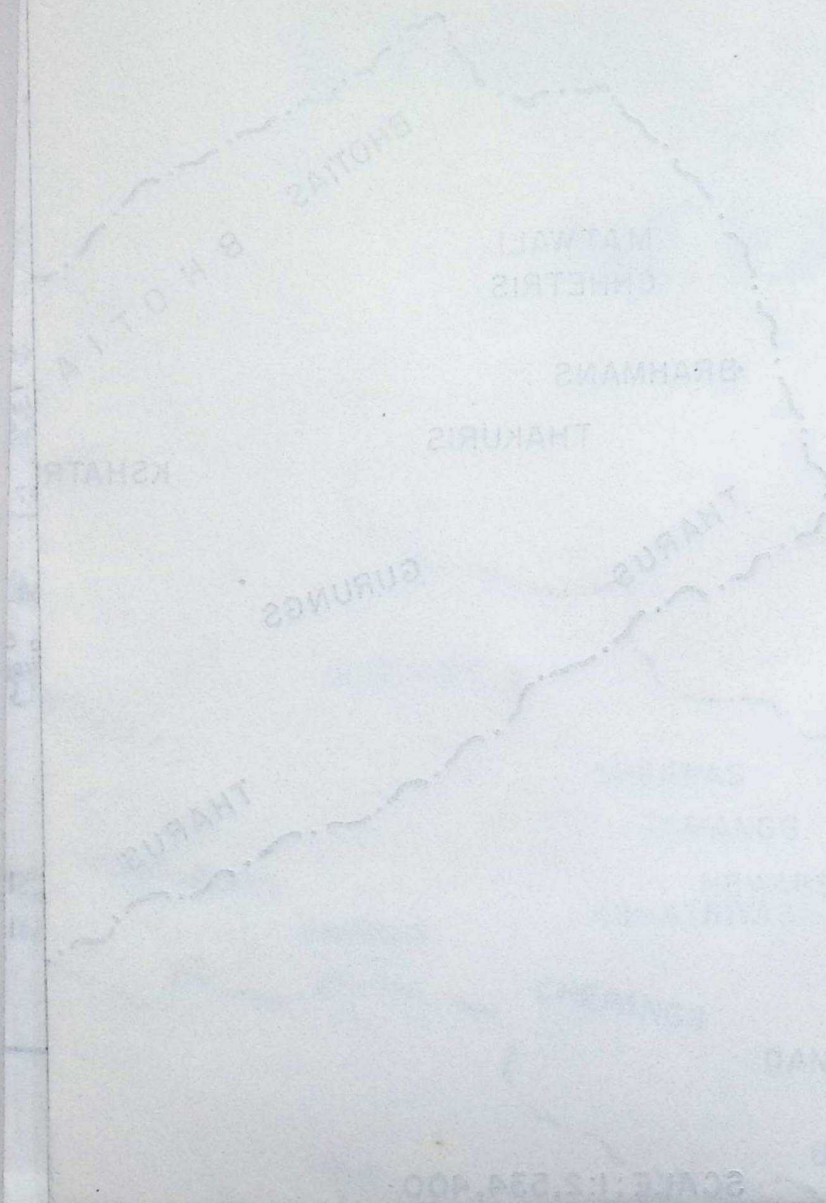
NAMES ARE GIVEN OVERLEAF ACCORDING
TO NUMBERS

SCALE 1:2,534,400
1 inch = 40 miles



ETHNIC GROUPS OF NEPAL





Introduction

Nepal which extends from Mechi in the East to Mahakali in the West is rectangular in shape, 500 miles long and 100 to 150 miles wide. It is a landlocked country sandwiched between Tibet under the People's Republic of China to the north and India to the south. It is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups, speaking different languages, holding different faiths and having different culture.

These ethnic groups are again split into different castes and subcastes resulting in minor variations in their ways of living, language and culture.

Apparently, Nepalese society is so diverse and heterogeneous as anything else, but under this apparent heterogeneity lies unbreakable unity. Different ethnic groups living under one government and one Crown are bound together by a subtle silken thread of nationalism. They are all inspired by one feeling that Nepal is their motherland and they are Nepalese, without which no nation can hold together.

Since Nepal is an agglomeration of different tribes and clans, its socio-economic history will remain incomplete without knowing their socio-economic life. In addition to the socio-economic history of the ethnic groups it is also necessary to know the social conditions and customs of some places whose social customs entirely differ from those of other places and their impact on the economic condition of the people. Some sections of the Nepalese society, it is true, still suffer from social evils. The system of "Debaki" in Dandeldhura and in Doti, for example, is obviously a social evil but because of the lack of education among mass they take glory in perpetuating the evil rather than removing it. "Go to the Village Campaign", if pursued in right earnest, can do a lot in removing the evils, by enlightening the people on the matter. It is hoped that an act with a view

to abolishing the evil practice will be enacted in due course as the new Muluki Ain which was enacted in 2020 B. E. (1962 A.D.) under the Panchayat Democracy has done away with the social evils like polygamy, child marriage etc. The economic condition of the people is also far from satisfactory. More than 90% of the people depend on agriculture. Their method of cultivation is still crude and primitive. Under the circumstances, the produce is bound to be low, affecting the economic life of the people. Due attention has got to be paid in raising the agricultural output to a maximum by introducing improved seeds and modern tools and implements and at the same time in industrializing the country by raising commercial crops as cotton, jute, pyrethrum etc., exploiting the mines and utilizing the rivers, waterfalls and other natural forces for motive power, the cumulative effect of which will be the improvement of the economic condition of the general mass. For this, sincere efforts have got to be made both by the public and from the private sectors.

Means of communications, too, are to be improved so that the backward ethnic groups may come in contact with advanced ethnic groups and the former may learn more quickly from association rather than by formal schooling only. The present effort by the government to make one east-west highway along the Terai region linking several stretches running north-south will certainly help the people of different regions to come in contact with one another to a certain extent, but people of remote areas like Humla, Jumla are yet to be considered. Though STOL services are made available to them, the poor people of those places can hardly afford the luxury of travel by air.

It is, now, no time to keep the different ethnic groups, either in the north or in the south, isolated. They all have to be brought together and made to work in the great task of building the nation.

It is hoped that the Panchayat System which envisages a society which is free from exploitation and is based on social justice and economic equality will render desired benefit to all the ethnic groups. The present book is just an attempt on socio-economic history of Nepal and cannot claim to be a complete work on the subject. The authors feel themselves satisfied if the present publication be a stepping stone to a complete work which some other better qualified scholars may undertake.

The Kirants

The Kirants whose main homeland ^{is} in Majhkirat and Pallokirat are one of the ancient ethnic groups of Nepal. The Kirant dynasty had once ruled in ancient Nepal.

The Kirants have their own language, their own script and culture. Their culture is marked by liberalism and freedom. To whatever caste or religion a man belongs, he can be taken easily into the fold of the Kirants.

The Kirants have their own religion. They call their family deity Yuma Sammang and God Niyan Fuma. Their priests are called Fedangwa, Samba and Bijuwa. A Fedangwa is one who is called upon to perform day-to-day priestly functions. A Samba is one who is supposed to know how to ward off evil spirits. A Bijuwa is one who performs religious rites on the death and birth of a Kiranti.

The Kirants have their own scriptures known as "Mundhum". Though they have their own religion, rituals relating to the life of a Kirant ranging from birth to death, their own codes of morality, they do not look down upon other people belonging to different castes and holding different faiths. They are Catholic enough to look upon others as their own brothers and sisters.

Love marriage has been in vogue with the Kirants from very ancient times. Though child marriages are not unknown among the Kirants, the couple are free to break up the tie of marriage if they feel that they cannot live in peace and harmony when they are grown up. The man who marries the wife of another has to reimburse the marriage expenses of the former husband. The man who marries another's wife and the wife who has left her former husband are not looked down upon in the Kiranti society. In their marriage no thought is given to caste and religion. Any girl belonging to any caste or creed, once she is married by a Kiranti is

taken into the fold of the Kirants. No discrimination whatsoever is made on account of her caste or creed. They are not at all orthodox and conservative.

The Kirants have their own way of settling their marriage. Once the proposal for marriage is accepted, the girl's parents get what is known as 'Chyapung' from the groom's side. Chyapung consists of some edibles. Sometime before the wedding, the girl also receives a gold ornament known as 'Yuparung'. On an auspicious moment when the main part of the marriage ceremony is to take place the groom is to give some hard cash to the bride; it is known as 'Yuparung Chyampma'. This hard cash is given under the explicit understanding that if in future the bride cannot live in peace with her husband, she commits no offence if she returns the money and marries a second husband.

The Kiranti marriage is of three kinds: one is 'settled marriage'. This kind of marriage is contracted through guardians. The second kind of marriage is 'kidnapped marriage'- marriage to be contracted by kidnapping other's wife, and the third kind of marriage is love marriage.

The first kind of marriage is contracted according to the rules and regulations prescribed for the marriage. According to the custom, a marriage procession is taken to the bride's house and the bride is brought to the groom's house where they observe all the rituals connected with the marriage ceremony. In the second kind of marriage no prescribed rules and regulations are observed. Both the groom and the kidnapped bride hide for a few days and after paying the marriage expenses to the former husband they both come out of their hiding place and give feast to their relatives and friends. In the third kind of marriage, both the lover and the lady love leave their home and stay somewhere else for a few days. When this fact is known to the parents of the couple, the couple are brought home and they are formally married.

All these kinds of marriages are valid and legal among the Kirants. The Kirants have their own festivals and dances. "Yalang" and "Kelang" are the two main Kiranti dances. Young girls enjoy complete liberty to dance with young men. Parents and brothers raise no objection to it as is done in other ethnic groups. Love songs are sung along with such dances. "Kelang" is a Kiranti dance which is generally shown on the occasion of marriage ceremony.

Liberation, free thinking and fearlessness are some of the marked characteristics of the Kirants.

The Limboos

The Limboos are a branch or an off-shoot of the Kirants. They are mostly scattered in the far mid-eastern Nepal. They are found in Tehrathum, Khotang, Taplejung and Panchghar.

They have their own dialect known as Limboo dialect.



They are brave, courageous and fearless and laborious. They have keen sense of loyalty to the king.

Their main occupation is agriculture. More than 90% depend on it. Very few of them go to trade and service. Young Limboos go to Malaya and India for recruitment and some join Nepal State Army.

They grow rice at low lying areas. At higher altitudes they grow potatoes, maize, wheat and barley.

They usually take "Uwa" (barley) and potato and drink liquor, especially on festive occasions and marriage ceremony and eat bacon. They also take milk and curd and crushed maize by boiling it.

The Limboos wear long loose thick woollen cloaks. The Limboo women of Taplejung wear beautiful coarse cloth, beautiful caps of coloured thread and stoles.

A Limboo lady during festival at Taplejung

Courtesy: Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

They live in one or two storeyed wooden or stone houses with thatched gabled roofs. The houses have usually wooden varandahs.

The Limboo youths enjoy the freedom of dancing with the opposite sex on festive occasions. This dance is known as "Dhan Nach".

The Limboos have their own culture and religion. Their religion is a mixture of Shaivism and Buddhism.

According to the marriage customs of the Limboos, once the bride is brought home the son-in-law has to go to father-in-law's house, with 'chyang' (a kind of beer made of rice), wine and bacon and also with some money. Once the marriage is settled the son-in-law has to make some advance payment to the bride's parents. It is called 'Sunaula Baina' (golden advance).

If a Limboo marries a girl belonging to some other caste or clan, it is customary for the bride to cook rice and pulses for all the guests and from that day on she is taken into the fold of the Limboos.

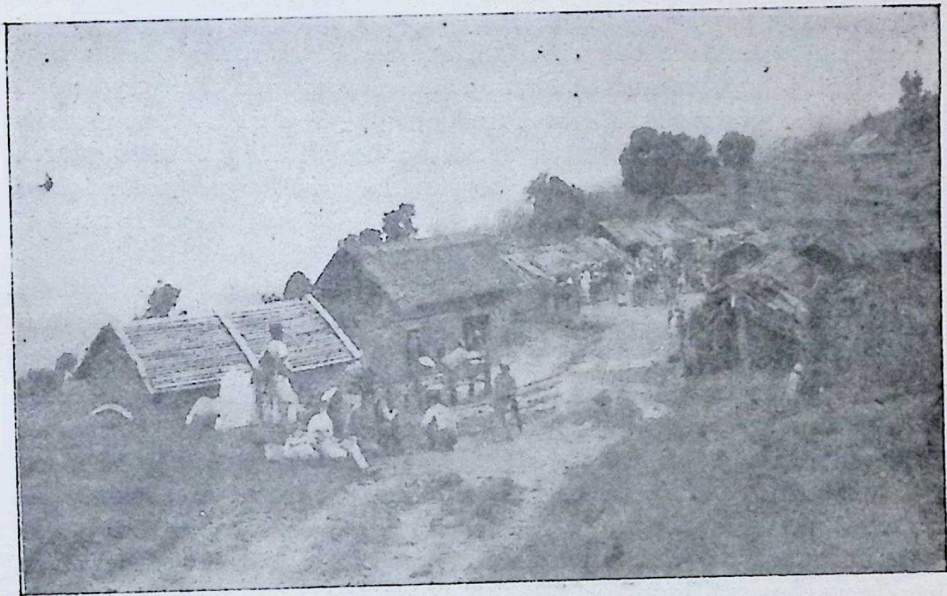
The Limboos observe mourning for three days on the death of a woman and four days on the death of a male Limboo. They are to cast off their mourning dress within three months at the latest and on that occasion they are to give a feast to all those who attended the funeral procession.

The Limboos are usually addressed as "Subbas".

The Rais

The Rais are one of the two sub-divisions of the Kirants, the other one being the Limboos.

Though they have a pronounced Mongoloid feature, they claim their origin to Marema-the daughter of Nina who was, again, the daughter of the earth and Mahadeva as Kirant, a roamer in the jungle of Simranganrh and Barahak shetra.



*Habitation of Rais and Limboos New settlement along the ridge of
Milke Danda North of Dhankuta*

Courtesy: Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

The Rais are mostly found in the eastern parts of Nepal, viz. Dhankuta and Tehrathum.

There are as many classes of the Rais as there are families, but the most important of them are (a) Thulung, (b) Bantawa, (c) Chyاملung, and (d) Kulung.

They speak their own language.

They are very brave, courageous, daring and fearless. They have won world-wide reputation for their bravery in the Gorkha Army.

Their main occupation is agriculture. Young men, however, go to India, Malaya and Singapore for recruitment. These people do not have their typical dwelling houses of their own.

They usually take rice, maize and potatoes.

A male Rai wears "Daura" (a kind of cloak) and "Surwal" (a kind of pyjama). A female Rai wears "Fariya" (a kind of saree) and "Cholo" (a kind of blouse).

The Rais settle and celebrate their marriage in their own way. An old man is sent with two potfuls of Raksi (a kind of liquor) to ask for the hand of a lady one likes. When the old man reaches the lady's house, he presents the above two potfuls of raksi and puts forth the marriage proposal. If the parents are willing to give away their daughter in marriage, they will accept the present of the two potfuls of raksi; if not, they will refuse. But most of the marriages are done by kidnapping the girl of one's own choice, because such marriages are supposed to bring about good results. A sum of money ranging from ten to fifteen rupees is given to the girl by way of advance payment and the girl is brought to the groom's house. Two or three days after the kidnapping, the groom's parents send a message through a middleman with two potfuls of raksi to inform the bride's parents of the kidnapping and the bride's parents through the same middleman asks the groom's parents to bring such and such things on such and such a day. On the occasion of the marriage ceremony of the Rais, meat and drink are served in plenty to the guests.

The day on which the marriage is to be settled, the middleman goes to the girl's house where he has to kill a hog with a bow and an arrow. If he succeeds in killing the hog at one shot of the arrow, he will be given a potful of raksi; if not, he will be fined ten rupees. There he eats, drinks and dances. After sometime he returns and with requisites as asked for, he with the groom and the bride goes to the bride's house. On that particular day the groom is nicely decorated. He puts on turban and wears "Daura" and "Surwal". The bride puts on a red "Fariya" and a red "Cholo" meant for the occasion and a wreath of tiny glass beads. On this occasion a line of vermilion is drawn on the frontal head in between the hair parting. The middleman and the old folk lead the procession while others follow them. When the procession reaches the house of the bride, the "Kaliya" (match-

maker) from the bride's side asks the following questions: "Who are you ? and where have you come from ?" The middleman from the side of the groom replies in low voice- "A flower was found blooming in your garden. We could have got it merely by asking for it, but we stole it away". Then the middleman from the bride's side retorts- "Why did you steal it away when you could have it merely by asking for it ?" The kaliya on the groom's side entreats as one crestfallen - "How much do you want to fine us ? We are ready to pay it, Sir," The middleman on the side of the bride, trying to exact as much as he can from the groom's side, says,- "fifteen rupees and nine potfuls of raksi",. He insists on having his demand fulfilled and will not be prepared to accept less. He further says,- "Why did you steal what you could have got for mere asking ? So you are fined fifteen rupees and nine potfuls of raksi and nothing less will be acceptable to us."

Besides paying the above mentioned fine in rupees and raksi, they have to offer money, a joint of a hog and many pofuls of raksi. This finishes the main part of the marital function. Then they begin minor functions: a potful of raksi is given to the village council for keeping the passage clear for coming and going. This part of the function is known as "Shangu Shepuni". The bride's brothers are also given a potful of raksi and a basketful of meat. After this the groom makes obeisance to the bride's parents by presenting one rupee each. The senior relatives will then be given eight annas each and the juniors, four annas each. After this the "Kaliya". on the side of the groom, chewing a piece of ginger, begins to speak out, "You (so and so) go out of this kitchen from now on". This culminates the marriage proceedings when the groom can claim the bride as his own. The whole night is spent in singing.

In the morning after taking leave all return home. When the bride is brought home, both the groom and the bride are seated together and a pair of fowls are sacrificed. This ceremony is known as "Hengghuwa". It is their firm belief that if the cock, when sacrificed, does not bleed, it has its bad effect on the groom and if, on the other hand, the hen does not bleed, it has its bad effect on the bride, and if both the cock and the hen do not bleed, the married couple will be issueless.

The Phangars

The Dhangars are one of the many ethnic groups of Nepal. They are mostly found in Jhapa, Biratnagar, Saptari, Mahottari and Sarlahi.

They have their own language, though they write in Devanagari script.

They are very simple by nature. They seldom tell a lie and resort to deceit and dissimulation.

Most of them are dark in complexion. They are tall in stature, stout and strong and have thick black hair. At the same time they are very laborious. They live by cultivating land. They also keep cattle and fowls. They are dexterous in making things for their household use. They generally use forest products such as canes and bamboos for such things.

They do not take rice cooked by others. When necessity demands, they take only flattened rice and fried rice prepared by others.

They live in a thatched house but they keep it clean. Their habitation looks very nice. They have a common extensive courtyard where they all assemble to sing and dance. While painting their houses, they make the figures of deer, elephants, peacocks and other kinds of animals.

They have no practice of child marriage. When they come of marriageable age, they marry at their own sweet will or with the consent of their parents. Their marriage procession is attended both by males and females. With dance begins their marriage procedure and with dance it culminates. On marriage and other festive occasions they eat and drink a lot.

The Dhangars are very fond of singing and dancing. "Karma-Dharma" is their main religious dance. They sing not only at home but also in the fields.

Almost daily in the evening after their supper they assemble together in the common courtyard for singing and dancing. Young boys and girls stand hand in hand and face to face in two rows. In between them stand grown-ups with drums. the dance begins. The young boys and girls dance going round and round. The grown-ups beat the drums and sing. This sort of dancing and singing goes all the year round.

Female Dhangars work as hard as the males. They are naturally fond of art and beauty. They are dexterous in making designs and figures of peacocks and other wild birds in Nepali baskets. They thrust flowers in their lock of hair to enhance their beauty.

Most of the Dhangars are unschooled and illiterate, but lead an unstained life on the lap of Nature.

The Sherpas

The Sherpas belong to the Mongoloid stock. They have flat nose, dark hair and small Mongolian eyes, and lips not protruding. They are fair in complexion. Most probably they have come from Tibet and settled in the northern part of Nepal. "Sherpa" in Tibetan language means "easterners".

The Sherpas are mostly found in the north-east of Nepal. Namche Bazar, Solu Khumbu, Helambu are some of the places where the Sherpa habitation is thick.

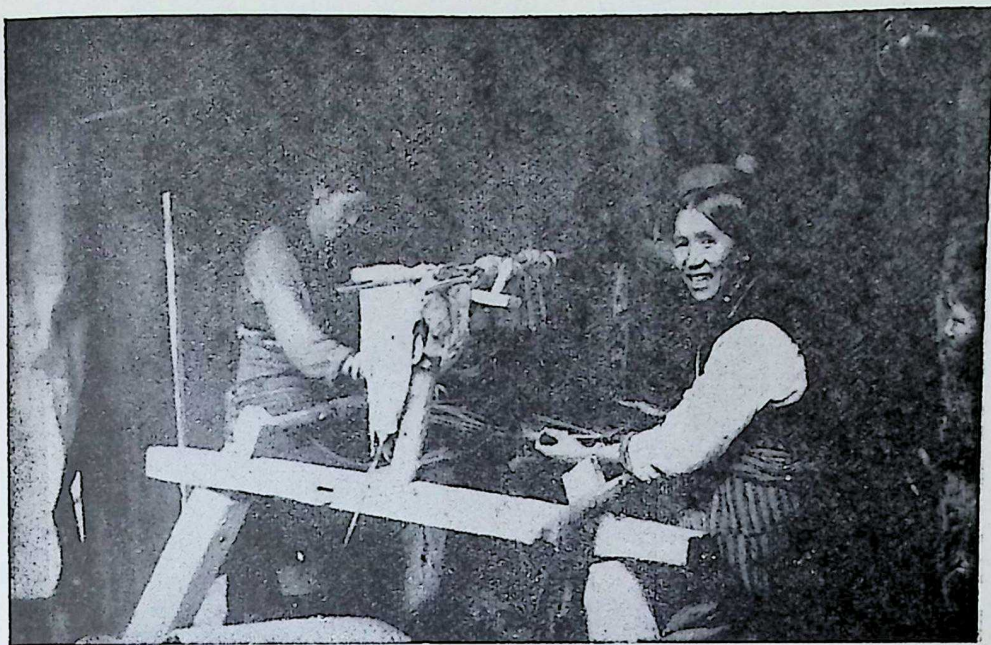
The Sherpas speak their own language-the Sherpa language. They manage to understand the Tibetan language as well.

They have their own script and books on religion and tantricism are written in their own language and script.

The Sherpas are jolly people. They are sociable and at the same time, very hospitable. They entertain their guests with Tibetan tea. They are not orthodox. Their guests can have free access to their kitchens and places of worship in their house. They are stout and strong and fair in complexion.

Agriculture, trade, yak farming, sheep rearing are the main occupations of the Sherpas. They grow wheat, maize and potatoes. They also grow rice in the fields on the banks of the rivers. Some of the Sherpas carry on trade with India and Tibet. Some prepare "ghee" (a kind of butter) and "Durukho" (a kind of dried cheese) and Nepali paper.

They weave woollen blankets and carpets. They make wooden utensils, baskets and so on. They also act as porters for the mountaineering expedition.



*Bhotias of Thudam village north of Topke Gola, E. Nepal
weaving woollen blankets.*

Courtesy: Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

As they have come from Tibet, their ways of living are more or less akin to those of Tibetans. Tibetan stamp is clearly visible in their language, religion and social customs. As they are nearer to Tibet than to Kathmandu, their culture is influenced more by the Tibetan culture rather than by the Nepalese culture.

Potato is their staple food, but the majority of the Sherpas take “phapar” (buckwheat) maize, millet etc.

They are dressed in more or less Tibetan fashion. On festive occasions they put on beautiful clothes. The women wear a kind of top-boots called “Sombar”. They come up to the knee and the upper parts of the boots are coloured. They wear a gown something like “jama” (a kind of long shirt) called “Ghorma” over which they put on “Shyama” a woollen garment striped red and black. With the help of a belt called “Tos”, it is hung either in front or on the hind part according to the liking of the wearer. To this belt is attached a spoon with a chain device. They wear “cholo” (i.e. a black blouse with red fringe or a long loose cotton garment.) Generally they wear earrings and necklace of coral beads.

The Sherpas who have visited Kathmandu generally wear Nepali dresses. They wear "Labeda" (a kind of shirt) and "Surwal" (a kind of pyjama), fasten a linen belt round their waist and wear a waist-coat and a jacket. They put on a Nepali cap. Instead of a jacket, they also wear a woollen "Bakkhu". The Lamas wear a long thick woollen outer garment and a skin cap with fur lining and flaps to cover the ears. Sherpas wear costly dresses and valuable ornaments.

The Sherpas generally live in two storeyed houses with flat roofs. The rooms are parqueted with wood planks. The same place serves the purpose of both the kitchen and fireplace. Because of the smoke:

the entire ceiling and the kitchen look black and glossy. With a view to drying flesh and faggots they are placed over the fireplace.

The size of the Sherpa family is not large. It generally consists of parents and children.

They are all Buddhists and observe the faith of non-violence. As they live in cold regions, they take meat but they themselves do not slaughter animals.



*Bhotia Women and children of Thudam village
north of Topke Gola, E. Nepal*

Couetesy Tirtha Babadur Shrestha

In each and every village there is, at least, one "Gumba" or "Ghyang" (monastery) where they conduct religious ceremonies under serene atmosphere. The head of the monastery is called a Lama. He is well versed in scriptures. A Lama incarnate is held in great respect and honour in a village. When a son is born, he is not allowed to eat the leavings of others for seven years. Within this period, if he gives an account of his past life and if it stands to test, he is revered as a Lama incarnate. This Lama looks after the welfare of the village community of the Sherpas and he is supposed to predict the future and ward off evils.

When a child is born, it is taken to the Lama and name giving ceremony is performed. Children are generally named after the days of the week, for example, if a child is born on Friday, it is called "Pasang" which in Sherpa language means "Friday".

When a boy grows young, he is free to choose his own lady love and marry her. To start the marriage proposal, liquor and chhyang are taken to the girl's house from the side of the boy. When a marriage takes place, the bride is given money as a wedding present. After they are married, they live apart from their parents. Generally the son-in-law lives in the house of his father-in-law till a child is born to them.

There is a practice of divorce among the Sherpas. A woman can marry as many times as she likes. When a woman is divorced, a bamboo stick is broken in the presence of three or four persons. Usually a widow or a widower cannot marry again within a year of the death of the wife or the husband as the case may be.

After the death of the elder brother, the brother of the deceased is entitled to marry the widow sister-in-law, but the elder brother cannot marry the wife of his deceased younger brother.

After death, the corpse is worshipped, taken round the monastery and buried a little away from the village. Those who attend the funeral procession are served with liquor and chhyang. Worshipping for the betterment of the soul of the deceased is performed for three days. They call it "Nevar" "Ghewa" (mourning) lasts for 21 days.

When a Sherpa dies, his corpse is not cremated immediately. Immediately after his death, the Lamas are asked to recite scriptures. It is called. 'Fewa' in Sherpa language. After the necessary ceremony, the corpse is washed clean, and clad in clean clothes and made to sit cross legged in a wooden carriage decorated with flags of five different colours and taken to cremation ground amidst musical band.

They observe two main festivals in course of a year. They are "Losa" and "Nara". The former is their great festival like the Dasain of the Hindus. It begins from the full moon day in the month of Magh and continues for a month. They eat, drink, sing and dance on this occasion. During this festival a white flag on a

tall pole is unfurled in front of a house. On this occasion they put on new clothes and ornaments. They invite their relatives and neighbours to a feast.

"Nara" is another great festival of the Sherpas. It is observed in the month of Shravan (i.e. July). In this festival too, they enjoy themselves greatly.

The Sherpas of Khumbu observe a festival known as "Dumje". This festival is celebrated with a view to warding off evil spirits. They eat, drink, and make merry on the occasion. This festival lasts for a week, but four days in between the beginning and the end, it is more interesting.

Playing cards and other forms of gambling with cubes of ivory marked with dots 1-6 are their pastimes.

The Satars

The Satars are one of the ancient ethnic groups of Nepal. They are mostly found in the forests of Morang and Jhapa. Their origin is still obscure, but most probably they migrated from Santal Pargannas and Chhota Nagpur of Bihar.

They are dark in complexion and have black crisp hair. They have strong physique and are fond of shooting with bows and arrows and of playing on flutes. They prefer to live in the kingdom of Nature far from the madding crowd. They are very expert in hunting. They wield bows and arrows and spears with ease. The Satars are very expert in weaving cloth and making brooms and mattresses from the leaves of trees.

Their main occupation is agriculture, but their farming implements and methods of cultivation are of primitive kind. Some of the Satars, however, keep cows, buffaloes, goats, cocks and hens.

Meat is, so to say, their staple food. Besides meat, they take rice, fruits and nuts. One peculiar characteristic of these Satars is that they take the meat of almost all kinds of animals.

The Satars (both males and females) are very fond of decorating themselves with the ornaments of brass, silver, bell-metal and wild flowers. The lady Satars put on brass and silver anklets, armlets and bangles, silver necklace round their neck. The male Satars cover their body with a "dhoti" of home-made coarse cloth and put a piece of cloth over their shoulders. The lady Satars wear an undergarment and upper one to cover their breast and scapula.

Child marriage is not in vogue among the Satars. Generally, a Satar marries at the age of eighteen. First, a matchmaker is sent to the house of the bride. In their language, he is called "Rayabarich". When the preliminary talks of the marriage are over, a representative from the side of the bride comes to the house of the groom as a guest. He comes there to see the groom and know the financial

condition of the groom. He is given plenty of wine to drink and meat to eat. When the representative from the bride's side likes the groom, an arrangement is made for the meeting of the bride and the groom in a particular place. When they like each other, the parents of the bride and the groom distribute beaten rice among the members present for the preliminary procedures of the marriage. On the occasion the groom hands over twelve rupees to the bride. Out of these twelve rupees, five rupees are given to the bride's father, five rupees to the bride's mother and two rupees to the bride's grand mother. On this very occasion the date of the marriage is also fixed. On the appointed day, the marriage procession starts and the groom's party is entertained with meat, wine, fruits and nuts. The bride is put in a "dalo" (a kind of Nepali basket) and is raised up to the sky by five men. The groom is also similarly treated. In the mean time the act of putting vermillion on the hair parting of the bride is also performed.

The Satars have the practice of widow marriage and polygamy. When their husbands die, most of the widows marry their brother-in-law.

They do not marry within the forbidden degrees of affinity. If however, some Satars do marry within degrees of consanguinity, they are degraded in the society. They are generally fined in kind and cash.

They have their own culture and language.

Like the adherents of the Vedic Scriptures the Satars also believe in the Great Creator. They also believe in the existence of other gods and goddesses. Marang Baru and Marang Thakur are their Guardian deities and Aato Bouga is Their Village deity. Manes (Pitris) also play an important part in the lives of the Satar. They believe that their family joy or sorrow depends on the soul of the deceased ancestors being pleased or displeased. They first offer their agricultural products to the soul of the deceased ancestors.

The Satars have no caste system. All the Satars belong to one and the same caste. The Satars observe a number of festivals as "Yorok", "Dasain". "Hariyad" etc. On each and every festive occasion they not only eat and drink but also do a lot of singing and dancing.

A satar patient is usually placed under the care and treatment of a "Jhankri" (one who practices the art of animism.). For six days from the birth of a child, they refrain themselves from making offerings to gods and goddesses. In like manner, offerings are not made to gods and goddesses till the 'Shraddha' ceremony of the deceased is performed. They believe in the existence of soul.

The Satars cremate their dead bodies. The son of the deceased sets fire to the face of the corpse. Three days after the cremation ceremony, pieces of bone of the deceased are merged in a river. They perform the 'Shraddha' ceremony (i.e. a funeral rite or ceremony performed in honour of the departed spirits of dead relatives, offering funeral oblation) for the betterment of the Soul of the deceased. The Sharaddha ceremony generally takes place in the month of 'Mangsir' and a goat is sacrificed on the occasion.

Though the Satars form a minority group in comparison to other ethnic groups, they are one which has its own culture which they have uptill now preserved.

The Sunwars

The Sunwars are said to have been originated from the Sun. So they say they belong to the solar race.

The Sunwars though scattered in different parts of Nepal are mostly found in Ramechhap and Charikot in Janakpur zone and Okhaldhunga, Solu Khumbu and other places in the Sagarmatha zone.

They have their own language and their own family customs. They show respect to their deceased ancestors by offering them 'Shraddha' in their own way.

The Sunwars are, by nature, brave, fearless and courageous. They are stout and short in stature and have ruddy faces.

'Marga Shukla Poornima' (the full moon day sometime in November) is a great festive ^{occasion} for the Sunwars. On this occasion they worship goddess Chandi and this festival they observe with greater pomp and grandeur.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Sunwars. They grow rice, wheat and barley in the river valleys, maize and millet on hill slopes. They also join the Gorkha regiments of the British and Indian armies. They are also recruited into the Royal Nepal Army.

The Sunwars live in one storey house built of stone and mud. The walls are white washed and the windows painted black. The roofs of some of the houses are made of wooden shingles, some of slate and some are thatched.

A typical Sunwar wears 'Daura' and 'Surwal'. Round his waist is tied a waistband. He also wears a jacket. Usually he carries a 'Khukuri' in his waistband. A lady Sunwar wears a velveteen blouse and a colourful sari. She is decorated with gold ornaments in her nose and ears.

The Sunwars are divided into 'Barha Thar' and 'Das Thar'. The Jerels belong to 'Das Thar'. Under 'Barha Thar' come Dargarcha, Garshe Jata, 'Halocha', 'Jijircha', 'Mulicha' etc. Under 'Das Thar' come Deppacha, Sharo, Turpito, 'Devlinga', etc.

A Barha Thar Sunwar cannot marry a Das Thar Jirel. Sunwars and Sirels cannot, however, marry their maternal uncles' daughters. Widow marriage and second marriage of deserted wives are in vogue with the Sunwars. A brother can also marry his deceased elder brother's widow.

Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of marriage among the Sunwars. — one is marriage by consent, another is marriage by abduction and the third one is an arranged marriage. In a marriage by consent both the boy and the girl fall in love with each other and they are married by mutual consent. When someone's wife is kidnapped, it is a case of marriage by abduction. In this case, a minimum fine of Rs. 60/- is paid to the former husband. A marriage by elopement is not given social and legal recognition unless the girl's parents approve it and the boy pays respect to the girl's parents. It has got to be done within two or three weeks. If they do not get the approval especially from the girl's parents, the marriage does not take place and the girl is retrieved.

An arranged marriage is performed according to the usual practices of the Sunwars. When the girl's parents give consent to the marriage, 'Theki Chardam' which consists of a goat, a chicken, beer prepared from millet, salt, mustard oil, turmeric and one rupee in cash is sent to the girl's parents. When these gifts are accepted, it means that the marriage is sure to take place. The goat and the chicken are killed and feast is given to the members of the family and other near relatives who are present on the occasion, after the family priest has performed necessary religious rites. The one rupee in cash is given to the senior male member related to the senior male member related to the girl's father, who announces the settlement of the marriage, the names of the boy and his father, those of the girl and her father and the date of the proposed marriage. Sometime before the actual wedding takes place, a kind of wedding gift known as 'Biha Theki' which consists of beer prepared from millet, some dried fish, or a dried pheasant is sent to the girl's house. Along with the 'Biha Theki' is sent a piece of paper on which is written the auspicious date and hour of the proposed marriage.

On the wedding day also gifts are sent to the girl's house. The bride's mother is given a bottle of wine, a leg of a sheep, and two and a half rupees. The bride's father is also given a goat, a pitcher of curd and one mohar (i. e. 50 paisa). 'Karsinge dajubhai' is given a goat. The bride is given ornaments and clothes. The groom accompanies the marriage procession with musical band played upon by the Damais. The bride is sent with the dowry given by her parents and relatives. When the feast is over, it is customary for the bride and the groom to go to the bride's parents house with gifts and stay there a day or two. The wedding is said to be completed when on the sixteenth day after the marriage, the couple visit the bride's parents again.

The Sunwars observe such festivals as 'Dasain', 'Tihar', etc. They also worship their own deity every year. All the religious rites of the Sunwars are performed by a Brahman while those of the Jirels by a Lama. It is customary for both the Sunwars and the Jirels to cremate their dead bodies and observe mourning for eleven days.

The Danwars

The Danwars are mostly found in the inner Terai (Sindhuli), Terai (Sirah) and eastern hilly regions.

This tribe is divided mainly into two groups, viz. Rai, Danwar and Tharu Danwar. They speak their own dialect.

They are stout, short in stature and dark in complexion. They are so very strict and conservative that they do not allow intercaste marriage. They are rough by temperament and timid by nature. Not even one per cent of the Danwars being literate, they are mostly exploited and suppressed.

They are terribly afraid of litigation. They are prepared to pay one hundred percent interest rather than go to the court on litigation. They are very honest.

They do a little bit of farming, fishing, and cattle breeding. They make ropes out of cactus. They also sell goats and buffaloes.

They have no sense of cleanliness, especially so on the part of the women. They are very fond of eating fish and rice. Their standard of living is very low. They wear a 'bhoto' (a short vest) and a 'kachhad' (loin cloth) and a Nepali cap. A female Danwar wears 'cholo' (a kind of blouse) and 'fariya' (a kind of sari).

They live in thatched houses. When partition takes place among them they insist of fragmentation of holdings, however small they may be. Daughters are also supposed to have a claim on the ancestral property. So when they are given away in marriage, they are given some portions of land and some cattle.

They have their own way of performing birth and death rites. When a child is born, for three days they refrain from observing all the social and religious ceremonies. After three days the members of the family and the near relatives have their nails clipped off by a family barber and usually the name giving ceremony is also observed on this day.

Women do not observe social restrictions as not cooking food or offering food to others etc. during menstrual period. They are also not supposed to be fit for observing social and religious ceremonies till they are married.

When a boy attains the age of eight or ten, there is the practice of shaving the head of the boy by his maternal uncle. It is known as 'Chhewar' (tonsure). This ceremony is celebrated with pomp and grandeur by giving feast and drink to their relatives and other invitees. From that time on, he is supposed to have been qualified for social and religious functions.

An auspicious hour is selected when a marriage proposal is sent to the bride's house. The marriage is said to have settled when the proposal is accepted from both the parties. After that, on a fixed day marriage procession starts from the house of the groom by beating 'madal' (a kind of drum). When the procession reaches the bride's house by singing and dancing in accompaniment with 'madal', the groom is stolen away as is the practice with them. Even if they fail in their attempt to steal away the groom, they forcibly take him away from the groom's party, and is taken to the bride's house. Certain rites and rituals are then performed and drink and dinner follow. Next day the groom and his party return home with the bride.

Strictly speaking, the Danwars observe the mourning period only for three days. On the fourth day when the family barber clips off the nails of the members of the bereaved family, oblations are offered to the soul of the deceased. Though some observe the mourning period for a year by wearing white clothes, it is not binding on all. They observe 'Shraddha' ceremony in a certain day in course of a year.

They have the practice of worshipping the Goddess of Power by sacrificing a cock or a male goat and buffaloes to Bheemsen. They have also practice of worshipping 'Mahadeva' and other gods and goddesses. 'Dhanya Poornima', 'Maghe Sankranti', 'Fagu Poornima', 'Chaitra Dasain', 'Chandi Poornima' and 'Dasain' are some of the main festivals they observe.

The Danwars are very fond of singing and dancing. They sing and dance on festive occasions in accompaniment with 'madal'. Only males take part in singing and dancing, while the females attend as spectators.

They still believe in spells and incantations.

The Tharus

Of all the ethnic groups that form the Nepalese Nationality the Tharus are one. Though they are one of the most primitive races inhabiting Nepal, nothing can be said with historical accuracy as regards their origin. Their origin is still obscure. No one has yet been able to throw much light on their origin. Moreover, there is no unanimity of opinion about it. Some say that as they have come from 'Thar' in Sindh, they began to be called 'Tharu'. Some are of opinion that they are the descendants of the Rajputs whose women fled to Nepal with a view to protecting themselves from the rapacious attack of the Muslims and married their pages and the aborigines of Nepal. Still others hold the opinion that they are the disintegrated parts of the Sakya clan which spread in the interior parts of the Terai. Whatever theories may have been advanced as regards their origin, there is no doubt that they are the aborigines of Nepal.

The Tharus are mostly found in the Terai extending from Koshi in the east to Karnali in the west and in some parts of the inner Terai as in Chitwan and Dang. They speak a language mixed of Prakrit, Bhojpuri and Maghadi.

In physical features the Tharus are very much akin to the Mongoloid. Their ways of living are, however, more akin to those of the Aryans.

The Tharus are divided into different castes as: 1) Rajput or Rana Tharus, 2) Bantar, 3) Khausiya, 4) Boat, 5) Mahant, 6) Mardaniya, 7) Bainth, 8) Sunaha,, 9) Khunaha, 10) Raji, 11) Kuchila, 12) Dangoriya, 13) Rajhattia, and 14) Kathariya etc.

The Tharus belonging to the Rajput, Bantar, Khausia, Boat, Mahanto, Mardaniya, Bainth, and Sunaha castes are found in Chitawan, the Dangoras in Dang and the Ranas in Kailali Kanchanpur.

The Tharus are by nature sincere and simple-minded. This is especially true with the Tharus of Chitawan. They are steeped in the darkness of ignorance, and are rather over obstinate.

Their main occupation is agriculture and animal farming, though their women engage themselves in making bamboo baskets and beautiful 'Dhaki' (a kind of receptacle made of cane) and nice fans of wheat straw. They set traps for the wild animals that come to destroy their crops and when caught they are put to death by means of spears and 'lathis' (staves).

They are very fond of drinking liquor called 'Daru' and also a kind of beer and taking bacon called 'Paccu'. Rice is their staple food.



Tharu women wearing usual costume and ornaments

They are not so particular about their dress. They wear very little clothes. They go about on a loin cloth and a 'bhoto' (a kind of Nepali vest). Almost all male Tharus put on a Nepali cap. Female Tharus also do not wear sufficient clothes. They just cover their bodies with a coarse piece of cloth serving the purpose of a 'dhoti' (sari), as well as an upper garment. Some of them use 'cholo' (a kind of blouse). Those who can afford put on silver bangles while others put on bangles made of sealing wax. They wear nose-rings and anklets. The Tharu women have a fancy for tatooing and keeping a lock of hair on the back of their head.

They live in mud-huts, often rectangular in shape, one side of which serves the purpose of a kitchen, and the other side of a bed room. It is not divided into a number of compartments. It has no windows except a few holes just to let light in.

The Tharus take delight in hunting while their women in catching fish.

The Tharus do not hold any particular creed. They generally believe in ghosts and spirits. They do not worship gods and goddesses, but now-a-days some of them have begun to worship Bhagabati, Saraswati, Bishnu, Shiva etc. They have full faith in 'Jhankri' known as 'Guraun' (a tribal priest supposed to ward off evil spirits and cure diseases), and 'tantras' and 'mantras' (spells and charms). Almost all the Tharus have, however, their family deity called 'Gau'.

Along with the offerings of milk and jute, pigeons and cocks are also sacrificed to this deity. 'Baram' is their village deity. They sink the head of the ploughshare into the ground and worship 'Jakhin' (Yakshinee) and also cremation ground by burying a log of wood- part of the mechanism for grinding oil-seeds.

The Tharus observe the festivals as 'Dasain', 'Tihar', and 'Holi'. During these festivals, they eat, drink and make merry. They sing and dance and the dance is known as 'Jhamta Nach'. 'Po' dance is their ancient dance. 'Jitiya Pawan' is their religious festival which takes place on the occasion of Krishnastami in the dark half of Bhadra, sometime in September. On this occasion they observe fasting.

They marry among their tribes. They hate intertribal marriage. They feel themselves insulted and humiliated to give away their daughters in marriage to a non-Tharu. If a Tharu girl happens to be eloped by a non-Tharu, she is brought back by a council of gentlemen and after performing purifying ceremonial rituals she is taken into their tribe and treated as a virgin and given in marriage to a Tharu. If a Tharu elopes a married Tharu woman the Tharu has to pay a fine of Rs. 60/- by way of compensation. If an eloper is a non-Tharu, this rule does not hold good and the eloped one is brought back by the council of Tharus and after observing the ceremony of purification she is sent back to her former husband.

A Tharu zamindar keeps a number of cultivators and cowherds. They live together as members of a joint family inclusive of their master employer-the zamindar. In some places, the whole family is spread in a village.

Although the Tharus observe class distinction among themselves, they do not boycott marriages among their different classes. The Tharus are not so orthodox as their women, as not to eat the food cooked by others. Because of this they are not, however, looked down by their women. The Tharu women are not so rough as to use foul language in their ordinary business of life and they wield superior influence in household affairs. Hospitality and decorating houses are the two bright gems in their character.

The different places in which they have been settled have their influence on their language and their tribal characteristics. The Tharus in Nawalpur, as for instance, show some differences in their language and ways of living from

those of the Tharus living in Morang in eastern Nepal and Rajapur in western Nepal.

The Tharus of Dang have their own distinctive characteristics. According to them, Dang itself was named after their king Dangi Sharan. Though they worship Hindu gods and goddesses, they worship their own deity called 'Bhutwa' which was said to be Menaka the heavenly fairy in the form of a mare, undergoing the cursed period of her life.

Their dialect differs a little from the dialects of the Tharus living in other parts of Nepal.

The Tharus are tenacious in their purpose, dutiful and devoted to their work. They adhere to their own culture and social customs and usages.

They mix rice and pulses and prepare a special dish called 'kawa'.

They observe many festivals. They observe 'Dasain' also but in their own way. They call it 'Badka Dasya'. On this occasion they sing songs and hymns in their own dialect called 'Badhkimad Bhakha'. They dance, eat, drink and make merry. They observe 'Makar Sankranti' as an occasion of 'Greater Dasain'. They worship their gods and goddesses, sacrifice swine and fowls, eat, drink, sing and dance. The Poojas are performed by 'Guruwa' (the Tharu priest).

They generally choose a man of personality and of riches as the village Headman. He is called 'Mahato' or 'Chaudhari' in their language. All the Tharus including the Mahato should take part in the religious performances initiated by the Guruwa'

When a Tharu falls ill, he is said to have been overpowered by 'Bhutwa' and the Guruwa with an oil-fed wick light, uttering 'Mantras' seeks to drive away the evil spirit.

In a Tharu family the eldest son who looks after the household affairs is called 'Garduriya'. He even manages external affairs.

The Tharus perform their marriage ceremony in their own peculiar way. The invitees are given food and drink and then they in a procession follow the groom who is decorated for the occasion. The groom puts on a white 'jama' (a kind of Scottish skirt but a long one) and a white turban. The groom also carries a spear with a fish pierced through. A person with a pot of liquor goes ahead of the procession and a maiden carries a 'dhaki' (a kind of basket like Nepali receptacle) with new garments and ornaments for the bride. The groom's parents or in their absence, his uncle or aunt must accompany him in the procession. The bride's party welcomes the groom by beating a drum called 'madal'. The young girls on the bride's side pass sarcastic remarks on the groom's party. After strewing particles of ashes all around the groom he is taken to the communal deity of the village. After this, the feet of the groom are washed and he worships 'Bhutwa'. The whole night the young girls make fun of the groom. On this very

night all the rituals of marriage ceremony as singing hymns, saying prayers and feeding both the groom and the bride from one and the same plate takes place and next day the groom returns home with the bride.

When a Tharu of Dang dies, his or her dead body is buried. A deceased male Tharu is buried with the front parts down while a female Tharu is buried flat with face upwards. Over the dead body are placed a bedstead, garments and ornaments. The Tharus believe in the transmigration of Soul. They put ashes on a large bamboo tray and keep it in a corner beside the door of the house and they believe that the foot prints on the ashes show to which form the deceased is supposed to have been born.

'Majira' kartal and 'madal' are their musical instruments which they use in singing and dancing after their day's toil.

Each dwelling of a Tharu has a family deity and each village a presiding deity known as 'Bhuiyar'.

The Newars

The Newars are the aborigines of Nepal. They are one of the most cultured ethnic groups of the country. They have their own culture, language and script. Though they have their own script, they now write in Devanagari script.

The language they speak is known as Nepal Bhasa. It is also called Newari Bhasa. It is one of the richest languages ever spoken in Nepal. Because of its richness, it is still surviving though efforts were made to suppress it. There was a time when no books, not even a pamphlet and a paper could be printed and published in Newari. Newari manuscripts are still preserved in the government archives (Nepal Rastriya Abhilekhalaya).

The Newars are widespread in Nepal. They are scattered in most of the districts of Nepal, where they carry on trade and commerce. But they are mostly found in the Kathmandu Valley.

They are loyal, painstaking and sincere.

Mongoloid features are more pronounced in them than Indo-Aryan features.

Most of the Newars are traders by profession, and some enter government service. The 'Jyapus'- the Nepali farmer class in the Valley and some Newars in hilly regions and the Terai engage themselves in agriculture. The Newars either do not prefer to enter or are not recruited in the military service. Masons, carpenters, plasterers, painters, dyers, sculptors, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, woodcarvers and other skilled and semiskilled artisans come from the Newar community.

Rice is the staple food of the Newars. Generally they take beans soup, vegetables and chutnis along with rice. Meat, egg, milk are in general, their subsidiaries.

A Newar wears 'Daura' and Surwal. and puts on a jacket and a Nepali cap. A female wears a sari, a blouse and a stole, Girls and married women wear glass bangles as ornaments round their wrists and those who can afford, gold bangles and rings embedded with precious and semi-precious stones are used in addition. They also wear ear-rings and 'tukis' (a kind of ear-ornament) made of gold or guinea. The tukis have now gone out of fashion. Widows are, however, forbidden to wear glass bangles, red ribbons or tassels to tie their locks of hair or plaited hair. It has become a fashion for them to wear a gold chain or a necklace.

The Newars of the valley live in brick-built houses of two, three or even five storeys, with tiled roofs and artistically carved wooden windows. Well-to-do Newars now-a-days have begun to dwell in upto date bungalows and R.C. buildings.

The standard of living of the Newars as is the case with almost all the Nepalese can be said to be fairly high.

The Newars know how to pass the hours off their duty. In the evening when they are off duty they amuse themselves by singing 'Bhajan' (hymns) and songs. In almost all the local units of the Kathmandu Valley and even outside the Valley where the Newars have settled themselves, they do the Bhajan. But these days these sorts of entertainments are being replaced by other forms of entertainments as the cinemas, games and sports, musical concerts and so on.

Though joint family is still in practice among the Newars, disintegration has set in. The modern tendency is to break up from the joint family and to establish a new home whenever and wherever great difference in the earnings of the male members of the family ^{and} appears as dissensions take place.

The Newars have their own way of marriage procedure and rituals concerning marriage, birth and death and other customs and ceremonies.

More than 90% of the marriage among the Newars are arranged marriage. Marriage proposal is mostly initiated from the male side. A go-between known as 'lami' is engaged. The 'lami' is generally a woman. She visits the family which has a girl to offer and carries messages to and fro. She brings the horoscope of the girl and also a photo, if demanded by the male side. The photo of the male is also taken to the girl's family to be shown to the girl and her parents. The practice has come into fashion quite recently. If the boy and the girl take fancy to each other by looking at the respective photos, an appointment is fixed at a certain date to meet at a place where the boy and the girl can see each other. This meeting place is generally either a cinema hall or a temple. Negotiations on other matters are also made through the lami. Believers on horoscopes consult astrologers whether they will be able to lead a happy and lasting conjugal life and whether they will be blessed with a son to continue their lineage. If all these things are satisfied, marriage proposals are reciprocally accepted and then the 'Gway Beigu' ceremony, i.e. the betrothal ceremony takes place. This ceremony consists in offering areca nuts and

other nuts, fruits, and clothes for the would-be bride. A note announcing the date of the marriage procession and auspicious day and hour for the wedlock is also sent along with the above items and 'Tika' to be marked on the forehead of the would-be bride as a token of good wishes for the bride. The 'Tika' is especially made of gold to use on the forehead. It marks the first occasion of the marriage ceremony and both male and female are morally, socially and legally reserved for further ceremonies to be held.

The above 'Gway Beigu' is followed by the practice of sending 'Lakha' i.e. offering of 'Lakhamari' (a special kind of sweet bread prepared of flour, rice and black pulse cooked in ghee and coated with sugar), its number varying from 12 to 32 and size about 15 inches each in diameter. 'Ainthe' (oval shape), 'Joprasad' (round shape), 'Matha' (square shape) are the varieties that Lakhamari consists of. Besides the above sweets, various fruits-both dry and fresh, dried fish, curd, sugarcane and special clothes for the would-be bride are also sent. The Lakhamaris are distributed among the bride's parents' agnates and cognates, differing in quality, size and shape in accordance with their nearness of relationship with the bride's family. In return, the relatives give presents to the bride on the day when dinner is served to them. And these presents form a part of the dowry to the bride.

On the fixed day the marriage procession takes place. The groom's party consists of the groom's guardians, his near relatives, kinsmen, friends and acquaintances varying in number ranging from a handful of men to one thousand or even more, depending upon the social status and economic condition of the groom's parents. The procession starts at night-fall, headed by a band playing on musical instruments as clarinets and drums. 'Chirags' (oil-fed torches) are lit to guide the procession. Before the procession starts a forerunner dressed in Tibetan clothes and carrying a pair of 'Jokota' (a specially made brass pan of about 24 inches in diameter) containing the requisites for worship is sent to the bride's house, announcing near arrival of the procession. The forerunner is led by a bearer carrying a 'Sukunda' (a metal oil-fed lamp with an image of Ganesh leaning against a 'Kalash' made of bronze or silver) with an image of Narayana guarded by serpent king 'Sheshnag' with four of its kind, forming a composite whole, and followed by 'Pancha Baja'- this is another kind of musical instruments with a set of five viz Mwahali or Shehnai (Clarinet) Tyamko, Nagara or Damaha, Nayakhin or Dholak: (different kinds of drum) Jhyalee (cymbals).

One special feature of the typical Newari marriage procession is the conspicuous absence of the groom in it. He is not supposed to go to the bride's house on that day as the actual rituals concerning marriage are performed not at the bride's house but at the groom's house. Only the guardian's presence is needed, because it is he who covers the 'Doli' - a hanging bed made of cords (like a hammock) and slung on a long wooden pole-in which the bride lies down and is carried on the shoulders of the bearers. The 'Doli' is covered with Tas'- a gold fabric. Prior to

this the groom's guardian is to show to the bride the whole arecanuts, musk pouch and silver coins kept in an embroidered kerchief as an evidence of flourishing trade and commerce on the groom's part. At the same time he also puts a silver ring on the bride's ring finger and silver anklets about her ankles. This takes place after the bride has been fed with varieties of dishes known as 'Panch Pakwan' and the guardian and his near relatives have given her the dowries. These days, the bride is carried, not in a 'Doli' but in a motor car.

Before the procession starts, the invitees are honoured with dry fruits, betel and cigarettes,. Each of them is presented with a package known as 'Masala' containing varieties of dry fruits and some candies. They are similarly entertained by the bride's party when the procession reaches the bride's house. Some of the Newar families prefer to offer 'Masala' in a 'Panbatta'- a silver box partitioned for each item of dry fruits instead of offering package. The silver box is artistically carved with beautiful designs on it. The box is shown to the invitees and each will take a few pieces of dry fruits.

After the observation of all these formalities, the next morning the bride is carried to the groom. The dowries are also sent along with her. A typical Newari dowry should consist of a spinning wheel, a spindle and 'Teema' (a bow-like thing- about 36 inches long), a bed, a pillow, a covering sheet, utensils necessary for cooking purposes, plates and cups, and water pots, though the practice of giving a spinning wheel, a spindle and a 'Teema' has now become obsolete. These days all sorts of things as trunks, drawers, dressing table and in some cases a sofa set and many other fancy goods are also given as dowry.

Next morning when the bride is carried away in a 'Doli' from her parents' house, a short dialogue takes place between the bride's priest on one side and the groom's priest on the other preferably in front of a temple of god-Ganesh. The priest from the bride's side initiating the conversation says, - "Ours is a very delicate girl as delicate as a flower and has been brought up with tender care. She is quite innocent of the ways of the world and out of ignorance she may make mistakes. Though she may make mistakes and commits faults unknowingly, please treat her kindly and forgive her for her faults, since she now belongs to you". The priest of the groom's side replies to him in the like manner. He says, "She has now become our daughter as much as she has been yours. She will be taken good care of without reservation. And there is no reason to worry about her welfare and happiness." Parting takes place under such cordial atmosphere and the bride is then carried straight to the groom's house.,

A special religious function is held before the bride is given entrance to the groom's house. At the entrance, figures of gods and goddesses such as Ganesh (God of Success), Kumar (God of Warfare) on either side of the main gate, and Brahma, Bishnu and Maheswara (Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer respectively) and Pancha Buddhas in the case of the Buddhists are painted. One of a pair of 'Twadewa

(a kind of oil-fed lamp-stand) symbolic of good omen, is placed on either side of the door. After performing certain religious rituals the mother-in-law reaches the bride to hold the key of the treasure room and leads her into the house. While performing the rituals at the entrance the mother-in-law throws away and burns 'Eeka and Paaka' (mustard seeds and rape seeds) by way of warding off the evil Spirits that may have come with her. By way of blessing the bride, the mother-in-law pours flowers and slices of fruits over the bride out of a 'pathi' (a measuring pot used to measure grains and liquid substance by volume. This measure is about a gallon) three times consecutively. A 'Tika' mark is then put on the bride's forehead. Here too, 'Pancha Baja' is necessary for 'Mangal Gan' (auspicious tunes) as it is necessary when the bride is sent away by her parents and is taken to the groom's house.

The bride is then taken up and seated with the groom and certain rituals are performed. The bride is made to go round the groom, put on a garland of flowers and bow at his feet, and present him ten whole areca nuts, symbolic of good sign of faith. Ten whole areca nuts are likewise presented to the father-in-law, also to the mother-in-law who is then introduced to the bride and the bride makes obeisance to both. She is then introduced to the members of the family and other near relatives and ten whole arecanuts are presented to each of them. Thereafter the couple are given 'Sagun', consisting of boiled egg, fish, meat-ball and 'bara.' Bara (a special preparation of black pulse pounded) and wine, after daubing their foreheads with 'Tika' made up of rice, curd and vermilion by the mother and maternal aunt. After this, they are made to eat delicious food from one and the same plate. On this occasion also auspicious tunes are played on Pancha Baja. That very day relatives and other invitees are served with sumptuous and delicious dishes. Wine is also served at the same time. It is specially served by the groom's mother and sweets are distributed by the groom. It is incumbent on the maternal uncle to give 'Sagun' and a suit for the groom as the marriage presents. Other near relatives send 'Sagun' and two or three meters of cloth.

On the second day of the wedding both the groom and the bride are taken to a near sanctuary or a temple as for instance to Bijeshwari by the Newars of Kathmandu and there the groom puts vermilion on the hair parting of the bride's head so that happy conjugal life may be perpetuated by the grace of the presiding deity.

On the third and the fourth day of the wedding 'Khwasoyagu' (which literally means seeing the face of the daughter given in marriage) takes place. This is another distinct feature of a Newari marriage. In this ceremony the party from the bride's side comes to see her face with requisites for worship, costly beautiful garments for the bride, 'Lakhamari' and variety of sweets and various fruits inclusive of plums displayed in a number of trays and also a bundle of sugarcane. The guardian first worships God 'Ganesh on a Sukunda', then marks the forehead

of the bride with 'Tika' wishing her good luck and hands over the garments to her. He then puts a gold ring on her finger, and presents her silver coins. Then other relatives and friends who are invited for the purpose also present silver coins or currency notes. They are then honoured each with a packet of dry fruits and betel.

When the function is over, the bride is taken to her father's house and the groom visits the father-in-law's house. Here too God Ganesh on the Sukunda is worshipped and the mother-in-law marks the forehead of the groom with 'Tika' wishing him good luck. The groom then presents ten whole areca nuts to the father-in-law, mother-in-law and other senior members of the family and very near relatives. He is then given 'Sagun' and is fed with delicious dishes. That very night both the bride and the groom return to the groom's house.

This sort of typical Newari marriage as is the case with the Parbatiyas can-not take place whenever the parties like. It can take place only in certain months of a year, namely, Baishakh (April-May), Jyestha (May-June), Ashadh (June-July), Marga (November-December), Magh (January) and Falgun (February) and that also only on auspicious days as pointed out by astrologers in 'Panchanga' (the Nepalese calendar). Marriage can, however, take place on three special days namely, 'Akshaya Triteeya', 'P'achinmara' and 'Basant Panchami'. These are supposed to be three auspicious days on which marriage can take place if convenient time could not be fixed) during the above months

Variations have, however, crept in a Newari marriage recently. The groom goes to the bride's house for 'Swayambara'. He also accompanies the marriage procession. With a view to simplify the formal marriage procedure, Both the groom and the bride and their relatives go to a temple with their family priest and perform 'Swayambara' there, feed the invitees and the marriage is concluded.

When a woman has given birth to a child, she is kept aloof for ten days. If the new born baby is a male child, the woman's parents are informed by sending a whole areca nut, a whole nutmeg, a loaf of 'chaku' (jaggery), a small quantity of salt, imu (Corum Copticum) and ginger but only half of each of the items if the new born baby is a female child. Generally the naval cord of the infant is cut off and thrown away on the third or the fourth day at 'Chhwasa' (a place in every locality for traditionally throwing away unclean things to Chhwasa Ajima deity. After that the mother is not allowed to touch the edibles to be served to others. On the sixth day at night-fall the ceremony of 'Chhaiti' takes place. During the time, the mother hands over the child to his/her father in the presence of midwife. This is to prove that the infant was born under the legal procedures. On the tenth or on the sixth day to suit the convenience of the family concerned the 'Byankegu' ceremony i.e. the ceremony of purification is performed. The members of the family and also the agnates and cognates purify themselves by taking a bath and their nails having been clipped by a family female barber

and the midwife bathes the infant, and the mother also washes herself. After this, the father and the mother with her baby are made to sit together and the midwife then lifts the baby from the mother's lap and hands over to its father implying thereby that the baby is their issue. For this occasion the parents of the mother of the newly-born infant send clothes, bedding for the new born baby (for the first born son or daughter), inner garments for the mother and meat, flattened rice and other edibles to give feast to the members of the family and the nearest relatives. On the eleventh day, name giving ceremony is performed.

'Annaprashan' ceremony (Cereals feeding ceremony) takes place on an auspicious day during the fifth in the case of a female child and during the seventh month in the case of a male child. On that day the baby carried by his or her maternal uncle is taken to the temple of Lord Ganesh. Feast is given to the near relatives and other invitees.

After the boy has attained the age of seven, the 'Bratabandha' ceremony is performed. On the occasion, his head is first shaved clean leaving only a tuft of hair to serve as top-knot known as 'Shikha'. The maternal uncle pretends to shave with a gold razor and puncture the lobule with a silver needle which are subsequently done by a Newar barber. The boy's aunt (his father's sister) pretends to hold the hair thus shaved in a special kind of plate. After performing necessary rituals, the boy equipped with a bow and an arrow, deer skin, a 'jhola' (a kind of bag) and dressed with only a 'Dhoti' is taken to the nearest temple of Lord Ganesha. There he is made to take seven steps on betel leaves at the end of rituals-preparatory for his departure to lead the life of a Brahmachari by going to his Guru's hermitage in a forest. His maternal uncle, however, catches hold of him and brings him back home by giving him a silver coin. But some who want to make fun try to make good his escape and harass the maternal uncle, necessitating him to look for the boy here and there. From that day on, he is supposed to observe all the social customs of his caste and community and put on a cap. On this occasion also a big feast is arranged.

In the case of a girl, a different ceremony known as 'Ee' is held after she has attained the age of seven. This 'Ee' is not actually the marriage of the girl with a bel fruit as some suppose it to be. Actually speaking, it is the marriage of the girl with 'Subarna Kumar' (the bachelor in the form of a gold image) representative of the Soul of the would-be husband. The 'Ee' is the mixed performance of both the Tantric and the Vedic rituals. The 'Kanyadan' ceremony of the girl takes place on this occasion and not on the occasion of the marriage ceremony.

The Newars have also the practice of confining a girl for fourteen days before she menstruates. For fourteen days she is confined to a room and no male member is allowed to see her. On the fifteenth day the girl is taken out of the room and she is first made to see the Sun God. Rituals are then performed when she

is given rice cereals and two or three meters of cloth. The female relatives are then entertained with feast.

There is another practice known as 'Boodha-janko' among the Newars. According to this practice when a Newar (male or female) attains the age of 77 years, 7 months, and 7 days he / she is placed in a chariot and is drawn by his or her children, grand children, and the great grand children. Necessary rituals are performed and a feast is held.

The Newars have a number of 'Guthis', most of which have now become defunct because the cultivators of land have ceased to pay the rent in kind or cash to the land owners. A 'Guthi' is a kind of social gathering in which all the members congregate at least once a year. It is convened by the members in turn. Generally a 'Guthi' has a plot of land or other source of income for financing it. The members congregate on a particular day, on which they not only indulge in feasting but also worship a Deity named by the founder or the founders of the 'Guthi'. The rules of the 'Guthi' are very strict. If a member is found violating the rule, he is fined in accordance with the rules laid down. One of the most important of these Guthis is the 'See-Guthi' (Guthi responsible for the cremation of a dead body). When a member of the Guthi dies, all other members of the Guthi are informed. On receiving information they come to the house of the bereaved family and help and make necessary arrangement to carry the dead body to the cremation ground. The dead body is placed on a stretcher-like bier made of dry bamboo-poles. The dead body is covered with a satin cloth and flowers. Generally there are fixed stations on or near the banks of rivers where dead bodies are cremated. While following a corpse the Newars do not put on their caps and shoes. It is also followed by a wailing party. When the dead body carried reaches a particular cremation ground, it is laid down on a pyre of wood or of sandal. Certain rituals are performed before cremating the dead body. Then the eldest son, if the deceased be father, and the youngest son, if the deceased be a mother, sets fire to the dead body, if the deceased has more than one son. On the following morning the members of the Guthi go to the bereaved family and express condolences. The nearest relatives send edibles such as flattened rice, ghee, molasses, curd, sweets, fruits and ginger to the bereaved family.

On the seventh day from the day of expiry the daughter (married only) of the deceased give rice balls to the 'Kapalika' (a particular sect of untouchables) at nightfall, a winnowing fan containing cooked rice, pulses and other eatables is hung from the eaves of the roof. It is called 'Pakhaja'. It is done with the belief that the subtle body of the deceased comes to take the edibles and he leaves his imprint there. On the tenth day the members of the bereaved family go to a river and take a bath. The male members shave their heads, clean and purify themselves by taking a dip in the river. The sons of the deceased put on white clothes without piping. Rice-cakes are also offered to the spirit of the deceased. They also clean and

purify their house with disinfectants. On the eleventh day, sacrificial fire (Hom) is performed at home. Incense is burnt and 'pooja' is performed, and the members of the 'Guthi', who carried the dead body to the cremation ground are invited to the feast. On the twelfth day 'Shraddha' ceremony is performed for the liberation of the Soul of the deceased from the world of the spirits and to enable him to rise to 'Pitriloka' (i.e. the sphere wherein the souls of the deceased stay) for divine judgement and dispensation of the Manes. Some prefer to perform the ceremony on the 45th day after the expiry. On the 12th. or on the 45th. day as the case may be when the aforesaid Shraddha is performed, edibles, utensils, beddings, pieces of furniture and other things according to the financial position of the bereaved family are given away in charity to the family priest for the betterment of the soul of the deceased. On this occasion also, the near relatives send requisites for the worship by way of tribute to the deceased. They are in return invited to the feast on that day. The bereaved family performs Shraddha once in every month for a year. The mourning period is generally observed for a year and the sons and the widow of the deceased, if the deceased be a father, put on white clothes without piping for a year. During this period the bereaved family observes no festivals and other ceremonies.

There are a number of festivals which the Newars observe. The most important of them are 'Bada Dasain', 'Tihar', 'Pahancharay' and 'Gun Poohni'.*

Broadly speaking, the Newars are divided into two sects: the Hindus and the Buddhists. The Hindu Newars have 'Deo Bhaju' as their priests while the Buddhists Newars have 'Bajracharya', as their priests. The Buddhists also may be under the influence of the Hindus that are divided into castes and subcastes, Bajracharyas being the highest, the Shakyas being the next highest in order of the caste system. Ugray (Udas), some Pradhans, some Haluwais, some Jyapoos, Sayami (Manandhar), Chhipa (Ranjitkar), Poon (Chitrakar), Kau (Nakarmi), Gathoo (Malakar), Nau (Napit) etc. come under the Buddhist sect. All these castes have been classified according to the professions they take to. 'Ugrays' are mostly traders by profession. Manandhars are oil pressers, Chitrakars are painters by profession, but these days they don't feel it incumbent to stick to the profession they are supposed to follow. They are at liberty to follow any profession they like except the profession of priesthood.

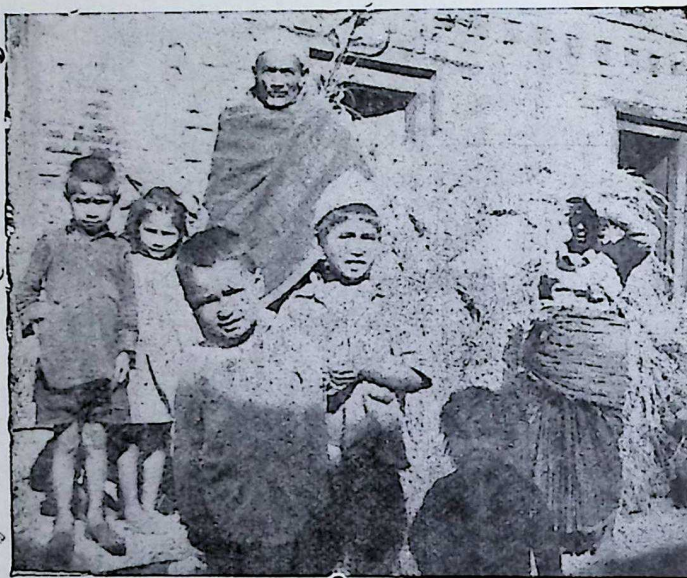
Though the rituals concerning birth, death and marriages and other ceremonies of all the Newars (both Buddhist and the Hindus) are almost alike with some slight variations here and there, even among the Buddhists, there are some differences, as for example, the Jyapoos in their marriage procession play their own musical instruments. They do not employ or hire musical band. They spend the night in the bride's house, playing upon their typical musical instruments and singing devotional songs in their own melody.

*For detailed study, refer to the 'FESTIVALS IN NEPAL' by the same authors.

Among the Manandhars the mother of the groom herself fetches the bride at midnight. The Bajracharya and the Shakyas also perform the 'Bratabandha' ceremony, but they call Barechhuegu'. They carry out the ceremony in a group of, say, five or ten or even twenty boys in their own respective 'Bihars' (monasteries). Unlike others they do not leave a tuft of hair like top-knots on their heads. They are shaved clean.

One of the marked modern trends in the Newars community is the breaking up of the caste barrier which was once so rigid.

The Newars skilled in different arts and architecture have contributed to the development and enrichment of the Nepalese art and culture.



Some members of a Jyapoo family

The Brahmins

The Brahmins belong to the Aryan stock. Like the Aryans they have long pointed and narrow nose. They are generally long headed, fair in complexion and tall in stature.

They are not the aborigines of Nepal. They migrated from India into Nepal. They are scattered in almost all parts of Nepal. They all speak Nepali.

The Brahmins, except the Jaishis [who are not taken into the fold of the first grade Brahmins, namely, Parbatitya Upadhyaya (poorbiya) and Kumai (or Pashchimi)] because of their descent by irregular marriage, form the preceptor class and also act as priests. As such they are supposed to know Sanskrit and scripture. They have the gift of the gab, and are shrewd, they know how to act according to situations and win friends and influence people.

As they are Brahmins by birth, their occupation is supposed to be of that of a priest and preceptor. but these days they do not adhere to these so much. As is the case with people of other caste, they feel themselves at liberty to choose any occupation they like.

Their staple food varies from rice to wheat and maize, depending upon the agricultural products of the place they live in. Of the Brahmins, some are vegetarians and some are non-vegetarians.

A typical Brahmin wears a 'Dhoti', a Labeda (a kind of tight shirt), a Cummerband (a kind of suspender) Uttariya or Uparna (a garment, made of ordinary white cloth folded four, on left shoulder) and a Nepali cap. But these days they wear Jackets over 'Labeda', and a pair of tight pyjama instead of a dhoti, as other Nepalese gentlemen do.

Likewise, a Brahminee (a female Brahmin) wears a 'Cholo' (a kind of blouse), Fariya (a kind of Sari), a waist-band to support the Fariya and a 'Pach-heura' (a kind of stole), ornaments such as nose-studs, earrings and bangles. But these days they wear blouse and sari only in general because of the modern fashion.

Those, who live in towns and can afford to build good houses, have nice bungalows to live in, but in villages they live in thatched houses.

They are high caste Hindus by birth. So all social customs are governed by Hindu religious injunctions as laid down in the 'Shastras' (Hindu scriptures).

On the sixth day of the birth of a child, a ceremony known as 'Chhaithi' is held. On this occasion, offerings are made to deities. On the eleventh day, name giving ceremony takes place. In the fifth month after birth, in the case of a female child and in the seventh month in the case of a male child, a ceremony known as 'Annaprashan' is held. According to this ceremony, on an auspicious hour the child is fed with rice-pudding and several other dishes. On the third year or later, shaving ceremony known as 'Choodakarma' is observed. On this occasion the lobules of the ears are also punctured.

According to the Hindu scriptures, life is divided into four stages, namely, that of Brahmachari i.e. leading the life of a bachelor and thinking of Brahma i.e. all pervading Supreme Being, that of Grihastha i.e. the life of a household, that of Banaprastha, i.e. going to the forest for meditation and concentration and of Sannyasi, i.e. the life of renunciation.

The first stage i.e. the life of Brahmachari is the preparation for the second (i. e. the life of a Grihastha) by acquiring the knowledge of the four Vedas, viz. the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda as well as their branches which consist of Shiksha (the science of proper articulation and pronunciation), Chhanda (the science of Prosody), Vyakarna (Grammar), Nirukta (etymological explanation of the difficult Vedic words) and Kalpa (ritual or ceremonial).

To enter the first stage of life, (i.e. the life of a Brahmachari) 'Upanayana' (i.e. leading near to the Guru i.e. the preceptor cum teacher) ceremony is performed. It is also called 'Bratabandha' ceremony, as the boy has to make a vow to observe all the rules and regulations prescribed for such a life. After going to the hermitage of the Guru, he has to obey the Guru, live under strict discipline, serve the Guru, beg alms for the Guru and hand it over to him. The disciple is to eat only that which is given by the Guru to him and learn the Vedas and the Vedangas from the Guru. When the Bratabandha ceremony is performed, his head is shaved clean and the whole body is washed. When he is to betake himself to the Guru, he has to wear only a loin cloth and a sacred thread to recite the name of the Supreme Being. He has also to carry a staff, a begging bowl and a tiger skin and a bow and an arrow.

The Bratabandha ceremony is to take place at the age of eight; if not then, it can be delayed upto sixteen at the latest.

After studying, at least, for twelve years, he is to come back to his parents, get married and adopt an occupation and lead the life of a householder (Grihastha).

before retiring to the forest life i.e. Banaprasthashram at the age of sixty at the latest.

The practice of going to Gurukul (hermitage of the Guru) for study has now become obsolete, though Bratabandha ceremony still exists. Instead of going to the Gurukul, these days both the boys and the girls go to school and continue their studies. After finishing their studies in schools and colleges, they get married and lead the life of a householder.

When a girl attains puberty and menstruates, she is confined in a room for a fortnight, during which time no male is allowed to see her. When she is taken out of her room after completing rituals on the fifteenth day, she first sees the Sun God and then only she is allowed to be seen by males.

During the period of confinement no members of the family take the food touched by her. From the next menstruation onward, she is not allowed to cook food and serve food and drink to others and also worship gods and goddesses and observe other ceremonies for four days whenever she menstruates.

Her caste is not determined as she is not married, and she is not allowed to cook rice to serve others.

A Hindu marriage is celebrated according to the injunctions laid down in the Vedas. According to the Vedas, a Hindu marriage is not just for the gratification of sexual propensity but for the union of the soul for the perpetuity of the lineage. So in a Hindu marriage, the concept of divorce is ruled out, though there is the provision for divorce in the revised 'Muluki Ain' (the law of the land of Nepal).

When a boy comes of a marriageable age, his parents look for a worthy match. When a worthy match is found, proposal for marriage is made and when both the parties agree, horoscopes are taken to the astrologers to see if the boy and the girl can live long in peace and happiness as husband and wife. Betrothal takes place if the astrologers recommend the marriage after consulting the horoscopes of both the boy and the girl. Betrothal is further strengthened by 'Bagdan' a ceremony in which the bride's father in the presence of the relatives of the groom makes a vow that he would give his daughter in marriage to her suitor. Astrologers are also consulted for an auspicious day on which wedding is to take place. Before the actual wedding there takes place a ceremony known as 'Swayambara' (self selection of a husband by a maiden). It is held in an auspicious hour. Marriage rings are exchanged in this ceremony. In the midst of religious recitals the bride garlands the bridegroom and in turn the groom garlands the bride generally with a necklace of gold.

The ceremony of 'Saipata' follows the 'Swayambara'. In this ceremony of Saipata the imprint of the palm of the groom on a piece of white cloth and also a note declaring the auspicious day and hour of wedding is taken

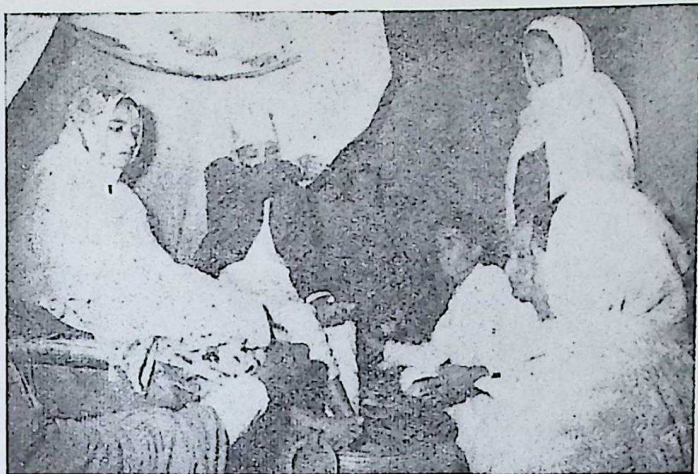
along with wedding presents consisting of clothes, sweets and fruits for the bride. The marriage procession led by the groom who is well dressed starts. Relatives and invitees join the procession headed by a musical band and 'Deokalash' (a kind of receptacle with circular tiers tapering to a pinnacle) carried by a bearer usually a woman. A large umbrella with images of gods and goddesses painted on a cloth with a golden pinnacle on the top is held over the groom.

The procession stops when it reaches the bride's house. There the bride's father receives the groom and the other invitees are also received. They are offered cigarettes, pan (betel) and dry fruits. The groom is then taken to 'Yajnashala' (a place where sacrificial fire is to kindle) and after performing some preliminary religious functions called 'Barani' the groom is taken to a room called 'Deutikotha'.



*Brahman bride and groom seated beside the sacrificial fire
by the family priest reciting scriptures*

After sometime both the bride and the groom are seated beside the sacrificial fire by the family priest who recites scriptures and makes offerings in the fire in the name of gods and goddesses. In the course of the ceremony heralds of both the bride and the groom announce their respective ancestry. It is followed by two other important functions, namely, 'Saptapadi' and 'Sindurhalne'. During the ceremony of the 'Saptapadi' the groom walks seven steps and that of 'Sindurhalne' the groom puts 'Sindur' (vermillion) on the hair parting of the bride. The most important feature of this ceremony is that fire-god is invoked in 'Yajna' as witness and both the bride and the groom are made to make vow (oath) to support each other in times of happiness and distress and never to part. When the auspicious moment comes the bride's parents who have washed their daughter's hands and feet, deliver their daughter to the bridegroom by placing her hand over that of the groom.



*Relatives washing the feet of the Brahmin bride and offering
Godadhuwa wedding presents*

Relatives on the bride's side also wash the feet of the bride and give her wedding present each in turn. These wedding presents are known as 'Godadhuwa' and they form the dowry of the bride. Excepting those given on the occasion she can make no claim on patrimonial property.

Next day the bridegroom with the bride and her dowry comes back home and the bridegroom's sisters welcome them back home by showing butterfed lights and by going round them. This in a way concludes the marriage ceremony.

They observe all the Hindu festivals, most important of which are 'Rishitarpani', 'Teej' or 'Haritalika' (a festival especially observed by the females only), 'Krishnajanmastami', 'Dasain', 'Tihar', 'Chaitrashtami' etc.*

When a Brahman dies, the dead body is placed on a green bamboo bier, or is tied to a green bamboo pole and taken to the cremation ground where it is burnt on a funeral pyre made up of wood or sandal wood. When a father dies, his eldest son or other nearest relative sets fire to the dead body and for ten days oblations of rice cakes with other substances and water are offered to the still unredeemed spirit of the deceased. During the above ten days, foodstuffs such as rice, ghee, sugar, vegetables are sent to the bereaved family by their relatives by way of helping them. They also visit the bereaved family personally to express sympathy and condolence. On the twelfth day oblations and offerings are made in the name of the deceased for the redemption of his spirit. Relatives and others concerned are fed on this occasion. According to a set of beliefs of the Hindus

*Those interested in these festivals may consult "FESTIVALS IN NEPAL" by the same authors.

a son is necessary for the redemption of soul of the deceased from 'Pretatwa' (state of remaining as an evil spirit) and also for going to heaven without having to go to a hell called 'Poom'.

During the mourning period which generally lasts for a year, it is the custom for the widow, the son or sons of the deceased, to wear only white dresses without piping.

The Thakuris and the Kshatriyas

The Thakuris and the Kshatriyas represent the ruling and warring class. They are scattered in almost all parts of Nepal and their density is thick in the western parts.

The Thakuris claim to be the descendants of the Rajputs from India.

The progeny of a Brahman by his wife belonging to other castes is called Khatri, but they are popularly called Khatri Chhetri. Some Khatri Chhetris do not however, like to be called Khatri Chhetri. They rather prefer to be called by the clan name of their Brahman progenitor as for example Pandey, Bista, Adhikari etc. The progeny of a Brahman by his Thakuri wife is known as Hamal Thakuri.

Some Brahmans and Chhetriyas who had once renounced the world but came back to household life again were called Sannyasis and their issues have been called by their family name as Giri, Puri, Bharati etc.

The language these people speak is called Parbatiya language now known as Nepali language.

The Chhetriyas generally join the military service. They also join the government service but those living in the hills and other places including the Terai take to agriculture.

In the hills they live in two storeyed houses made of stones or mud bricks.

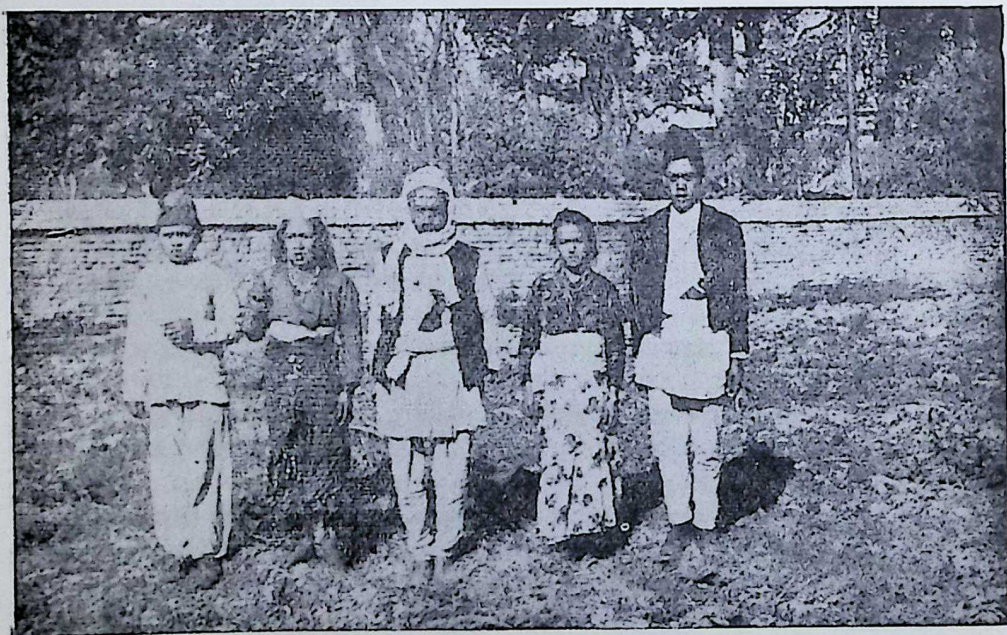
Unlike a Brahman girl, a Chhetriya girl is married only when she is grown up. As regards marriage rituals concerning birth and death, there is very little difference between those of the Brahmans and of the Thakuris and Chhetriyas. The Brahmans and the Thakuris and the Chhetriyas too observe the same festivals in the same manner.

The Tamangs

Though the Tamangs claim themselves to have been descended from Mahadeva, they seem to have migrated from Tibet. They are mostly found in the northern parts of Nepal, Nuwakot is their main homeland. They are also found in Phedigram (Phedi village) in the Makawanpur district. They speak their own dialect.

The Tamangs are divided into a number of clans, namely (1) Blon, (2) Theen, (3) Syandan, (4) Pakhrin, (5) Wypa, (6) Moktan, (7) Gole, (8) Ghlan, (9) Syanba, (10) Gising, (11) Rumba, (12) Lungba, (13) Thohor, (14) Phyukurthara, (15) Ghyapa, (16) Dhepa, (17) Dimdong (18) Samden and (19) Lho.

The physical features of the Tamangs indicate that they belong to the Mongoloid. They are wheatish in complexion.



Some Members of a Tamang family of Sindhu Dhuseni, Nepal

Their primary occupation is agriculture. They grow rice, maize and potato. Their main source of income is the proceeds from the sale of potatoes. Animal husbandry is another occupation of the Tamangs.

Maize is the staple food, but they also take millets and occasionally rice

The typical Tamang costume consists of a 'Daura' (a kind of long 'Bhoto' with sleeves), a loin cloth, a thick coarse woollen jacket without sleeves (bakkhu and a Nepali cap. A long piece of white cloth is fastened round the waist and it serves the purpose of a belt and also supports his khukuri (a typical Nepali sword varying from 10 to 18 inches in length). A female Tamang wears a Gunyu (a kind of female dhoti), a cholo (a kind of blouse) and a 'Barka' (a separate outer covering of the body which covers upto the waist). She puts on ear ornaments on festive occasions or when she goes to her mother's house.



A Tamang woman of Dhankuta district of Nepal

Courtesy: Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

The houses of Tamangs, especially of those living in Phedigram are generally built of unbaked bricks or white marbles. The doors and the windows are of old type and the roofs are thatched. Almost all the houses have courtyards and porches. Grains and other cereals are dried in the sun on the courtyards.

The Tamangs are Buddhists by religion, but they are not fanatics. The life of the Tamangs is swayed by the Lamas and Lamaism. They have full faith upon Lamaism. They believe in rebirth and in the cure of diseases by means of 'Jhankri' (a tribal priest supposed to ward off evil spirits and cure diseases). The Lama acts as priests and preceptors for the Tamangs.

They live in the patriarchial joint family and the law of primogeniture prevails among some of the clans. So does polygamy which is fast disappearing in conformity with the new 'Muluki Ain'.

They generally marry in their own class. Their marriage system is very simple. A boy may fall in love with a girl. Then a Lama or the chief man of the village is made to communicate the message to the guardian of the girl. Mutual consultation takes place then and there, and the boy and the girl are married. Feast is given to their relatives and friends. The new bride is then taken in the community. Widow marriage is also legal among them.

On the ninth day of the birth of a child the mother washes herself and cleans the baby. A very bitter herb is burnt for incense. Name giving ceremony also takes place on that very day. A child is generally named after the day on which it is born. On the twelfth day others can drink the water touched by the mother.

The Tamangs have 'Guthi' (association) of their own kind. Their Guthi lasts from 1st to 10th Poush (sometime in December) every year. The family which is to observe the Guthi prepares 'jand' (a kind of beer). It is offered to the family deity. On this occasion they eat and drink a lot. They also observe 'Dasain' and 'Tihar'. A fair is held on the full moon day of Chaitra (March-April) which is known as 'Mela'. A fair is also held on the first day of the month of Shrawana (sometime in July-August) and on Magh (January).

The Tamangs have the practice of Tonsure; they call it 'Chhewar'. They generally do it at the age of 3, 5, 7 or 9.

During the mourning period, a Lama sets up 'Urken' (an image of Lord Buddha). Those who can afford observe the mourning period till Tihar and those who cannot afford observe it only for three days or even one day. On the last day of the mourning period the sons who have observed the mourning or some other person prepares rice and makes seven or eight or even fifteen images of boiled rice. They are then made smooth, decorated and worshipped. On this day they give a sumptuous dinner to those who had attended the funeral procession. Like the Hindus, the Tamangs also burn the dead bodies and a Lama performs some rituals.

The Tamangs are simple in living. They do have self-contentment and as such they seem always happy. In general, they did not like ^{the} materialistic world. They love nature. They are honest.

The Chepangs

The Chepangs are one of the isolated ethnic groups of Nepalese people. They live in Lothar Khola region, east to west of Kandrang Garhi and in the valleys washed by Male Khola, in the mid-region of the Mahabharat Range. Before they settled themselves in villages, they used to lead a nomadic life. They used to fish and hunt. They are very quick in climbing and they can climb even the cliffs at ease.

Unlike the Brahmans and Tamangs, they are short in stature and have Mongolian features. They have flat nose and black and curly hair. They are comparatively thin.

The Chepangs have their own language. Their language, it seems, belongs to Tibeto-Burman family..

They cultivate lands and grow maize and millets. They live in sheds made of the branches of trees. Though they have begun to lead a settled life, their ways of living are still more or less akin to those of the nomads. Though they have ceased to use bows and arrows in hunting, they set traps to catch birds. They collect nettle and 'tarul' (*dioscorea daemonia*) from the forest and take them home.

They make a fine catch of fish by blocking the flow of streams from the Mahabharat range.

As they lived in the forest at first, they used to sow only 'fagogrun tetarium) and chiefly lived on hunting and fruits and nuts. They now do terrace farming as well. In Lothar Khola region they grow maize, millet, potato and tobacco.

They also keep cows, goats, fowls and swine. Oxen are used in ploughing.

They still resort to barter system. They exchange lemons, oranges, bassia butyracea, tobacco etc. for their necessities as salt, cloth, kerosine oil, rice etc. They make 'nanglo' (winnowing fan), 'dalo' (a kind of basket), and 'doko' (a kind of latticed basket).

They cover their body with a sheet of cloth formed itself into the shape of a waist coat and place a rectangular piece of cloth over the shoulder.

The Chepangs have no sub-caste. In theory, Tamangs, Gurungs and Chepangs are placed on equal footing but in practice the Tamangs and the Gurungs place them in the level of 'sarkis' (shoemakers) and the 'kamis' (blacksmiths), both of which are untouchables in the Nepali society.

The Chepangs have the practice of marrying cousins (maternal uncle's daughters). A well-to-do Chepang marries his wife's sister as well.

No person belonging to high castes takes the rice cooked by a Chepang. The Brahmans and the Chhetriyas treat them as untouchables. They keep swine as other untouchables do.

The Chepangs have their own religious beliefs. One who performs religious rites for them is called 'Pande' in their language. A Pande is just like a 'Jhankri' (medium) in other tribes. He is supposed to cure a patient by spiritual incantation.

Every Chepang village has its own sanctuary.

Every year in the month of Marga (November) the head of the family worships the family goddess. They offer rice, cock and fish to her. 'Kartik Poornima', 'Tihar', 'Maghe Sankranti', 'Falgun Poornima', 'Chaitra Dasain' are some of the festivals of the Chepangs. On such festive occasions they assemble together, eat and drink beer made out of maize and both males and females dance in a special fashion in accompaniment with a 'madal'.

The Gurungs

The Gurungs are another important ethnic groups of Nepal. Though their origin is not known, it is probable that they first came from Tibet to settle in Nepal. Their physical features reveal that they belong to the Mongolian stock. They are stout and strong, have thick lips and flat nose. Most of them have little or no beard.

They are mostly found in Lumjung, Gorkha, Kaski, Ghandrung in Western Nepal and some live in higher slopes of the Himalayan region. Rumjatar of Sagarmatha zone at the foot of Okhaldhunga is a famous Gurung village.

They speak their own dialect which is more or less akin to the Tibetan language. Though their dialects differ from district to district, the dialect which is spoken by the Gurungs of Lamjung and Kaski is generally understood by all Gurungs.

The Gurungs are simple in nature. They are fair and square in dealings.



A Gurung boy, in the north-west of Taplejung, E. Nepal, making a prop for a doko

The main occupation of the Gurungs living in the Lamjung district is agriculture. About 95% of the population there engage themselves in agriculture. The remaining 5% engage in trade, service and other occupations adjoining the Gorkha regiment abroad. The Gurungs living in the northern part of Lamjung rear sheep, goats etc. and make artistically woven woollen blankets, bed coverings, Bakkhu, jackets, pasmina comforters and stoles (fine woollen sheets) etc. which are in great demand these days, in tourists' market in Nepal.

Though the Gurungs are very hardy and laborious, their economic condition is not so good. Because of the difficult agricultural condition in high altitudes the products from the land are not sufficient to maintain themselves well. They have to live on millet, maize and a few on rice. Some of them have to live even on refined 'jand' (fermented liquid from millets, wheat etc.) and 'tarul' (yam). They also grow wheat, phapar (buckwheat), barley, pulses, soyabeans, string beans and other kind of beans. Two crops-winter and summer- are raised in most of the places. Ghee, wool, herbs form the bulk of the commercial commodities in which they deal.

The Gurungs generally wear 'Bhoto' (a kind of vest) and a 'dhoti' which they wrap round their waist down to the knee. Some other Gurungs wear 'jama' (a kind of Scottish skirt). Their women wear colourful 'fariya' (a kind of sari) known as 'gaun' by brand name in their own peculiar fashion, and 'ghalek' (a kind of upper garment) which they use over their blouse. They are very fond of wearing coloured velvet 'cholo' (a kind of blouse with sleeves). They are also fond of wearing ornaments as 'jhanke bulake' (a kind of nose ring), 'lahura phuli' (a kind of ear ornament). They are very fond of decorating themselves.

The Gurungs are a very jolly tribe. They make merry on each and every occasion. They sing and dance with the help of 'madal' beats. Ghatu dance is a typical Gurung dance.

The Gurungs are so very fond of entertainments that they have a separate place known as 'Rodi Ghar' for dancing and singing. The 'Rodi Ghar' is, so to say, a dancing hall where young boys and girls assemble and sing songs of their own. The songs form a series of remarks and rejoinders. The 'Rodi Ghar' entertainment is generally enjoyed at the time of harvesting.

They live together happily in peace. Should there be an altercation between husband and wife destroying the peace at home, their matrimonial alliance is terminated, after which both the husband and wife are once more regarded as bachelor and maid. Cousins (a maternal uncle's son and an aunt's daughter or vice versa) can marry each other.

A Gurung marriage is an arranged marriage. With the mutual consent of the parents, the future husband and the future wife, when they are quite young are betrothed and they are to be married to each other when they attain marriageable age. When they are thus married, they give a feast known as 'chheto'

in which liquor and 'jand' and meat are served in plenty. When the marriage procession returns to the bride, the women on the bride's side accompany the bride upto the groom's house. The women who join the marriage procession from the groom's side are given 'mujetro' (scarfs) and are fed.

The procedure for divorce is also very simple among the Gurungs. When divorce is sought among the Gurungs belonging to the clan of 'Char jat', a sum of Rs. 80/ has got to be paid by the party seeking divorce to the other party and among the Gurungs belonging to 'Sohra jat', a sum of Rs 40/ has got to be paid to the other party.

When a Gurung dies, his horoscope is consulted and the dead body is cremated or buried as is directed by the astrologer. Thirteen days after the death of a Gurung, a ceremony known as 'Arghaun' is performed. On this occasion, an image of the deceased is made and dressed and adorned as when he was alive. Scriptures are then recited by the Lama priest. Offerings from the relatives and kinsmen in the village are made to the image. They are then fed with rice, 'jand', liquor and meat. If the dead body is buried, a temple or a shed is erected over the burial place.

The Gurungs believe in 'Jhankris' and the Lama. The Lamas are their priests. The Gurungs are Buddhists by religion. They are generally liberal and tolerant.

The Gurungs observe 'Baisakh Poornima' festival and also 'Dasain' and 'Tihar' festivals.

The Gurungs of Gandaki have a story in verse known as 'Sohrathi' a dance which is based on the old story of a king who had seven wives but no children. At last the youngest queen bore a daughter but owing to the intrigues and jealousy of the senior queens she was cast away in a river where a fisherman found and brought her up. At last the whole plot was revealed and the daughter and the mother were happily reunited and the culprits were punished.

It is to be mentioned that the Ghatu dance is of two kinds : (1) Bahramase and (2) Sati. Bahramase (literally twelve months) Ghatu dance is for all the year round but Sati Ghatu dance is meant only for the full moon day of Baishakh. Ghatu dance needs a great deal of physical exertion and only unmarried girls can take part in it.

The Magars

The origin of the Magars is not yet known. It is guessed that they have come from Tibet. Though they are found widely scattered in the eastern Terai, they are mostly found in mid-western Nepal, namely Palpa, Gulmi, Bhirkot, Piuthan etc.

The imprint of the Tibetan culture is visible in the culture of the Magars. Their language and dances, as for example, are tinged with the Tibetan culture.

They have their own mother language which comes under the category of the Tibeto- Burman family. They have their own script though they have now begun to use Devanagari script as well.

They are divided into six clans-namely Rana, Thapa, Ale, Poon, Budhathoki and Gharti.

Most of the Magars are craftsmen though some Magars who have their own land take to agriculture. Some work as miners, some as blacksmiths, some as basket weavers or painters and so on. They also deal in salt which they bring from Tibet. Swine keeping is also one of their occupations. They prepare 'charesh' (hashish) and also engrave designs of flowers round about slender bamboo pens. They also manufacture Nepali paper. They generally go to India, Malaya, Singapore for recruitment in the Gorkha army, They are also recruited in the the Nepal army.

They are simple minded, lalorious, honest and self-reliant. They themselves supply their daily needs for clothing and fooding.

The Magars in Palpa are fond of Karuwa Nach. They observe complete cessation from work once a week- every Monday. It is called 'Herelobarne'.

They are Buddhists by religion but some of them have espoused Hinduism. They are devout believers in religious performances. So in almost all the villages inhabited by the Magars there is to be found a temple of Bhagabati (Goddess of Power).

They have their own costume. A typical Magar wears a loin cloth, a 'bhoto' (a kind of shirt with sleeves) or a shirt and a coat, while a Magar woman



A Typical Magar

Courtesy: Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

wears a 'dhoti' of short width, the front part of which is made shorter than that of the back. She wears a pair of 'Fuli' (a flower-like ear ornament) amidst both ears, a wreath of glass beads and of Indian silver coins. A Magar youth prefers to wear a velvet waist coat with silver buttons on it.

They take rice and maize and they are fond of drinking. They are non-vegetarians. They take meat of buffaloes, fowls and swine.

They generally live in two storeyed houses with roofs of slate or reed. Houses are generally large and are made of stones with a verandah in front.

The Magars are by nature jolly and enjoy themselves singing and dancing. They have different kinds of dances namely 'Paiseri' dance in which they dance in a single file; Singaru dance, etc. Singaru dance is just like peacock dance. They have their own tribal games, such as Goreto, Hata etc. which they enjoy playing.

They have their own way of wedding. The marriage may be either arranged or forced, of course, with the consent of the maiden. but not of parents, or it may be love marriage. In the arranged marriage the groom's sister's husband goes to the

house of the bride's parents. He takes with him some five hundred rupees and a few gallons of liquor. A middle man is employed to coax the maiden to accede to the marriage proposal. If the bride is pleased to accede to the marriage proposal, marriage takes place and the middle man is given some rupees, some gallons of liquor and some bread. If the maiden refuses to accept the proposal, she may be waylaid and kidnapped. In such a case the groom has to pay a fine varying from Rs. 100/— to Rs. 500/— to the parents of the bride. Once the fine is paid the bride's parents accept the gifts of liquor, bread and meat which their custom demands.

The groom then goes to the house of the bride's parents. When he gets near the house, he is carried on the shoulders of the father-in-law or brother-in-law and the foreheads of both the groom and the bride are marked with 'Tika' and this culminates the marriage.

Marriage tie can be broken by both husband and wife. If the wife wants to divorce her husband, she has to pay the marriage expenses incurred by her husband. If, on the other hand, the husband wants to divorce his wife, he has to pay only Rs. 35/—

The Magars have their own customs to be observed on birth and death. On the eleventh day of the birth of a child, the child is washed for the first time and the child is named with a ceremony. On this occasion some Magars get the 'Yajna' performed by the Brahmins while others invite the old folks and the children of the village to a dinner. They cook rice and a cock is killed whose head is thrust into the rice and after uttering Mantras (spell) they start eating. If available, a prophet is called in to name the child; if not, the child is named after the day of the week or the month of the year when the child was born.

When a Magar dies, he is either cremated or buried. On the occasion of the cremation or burial, they customarily ask the departed soul to come and have the oblation on the fifteenth day. On that day they go to a forest and offer meat of buffaloes, goats, rice, bread and liquor to the aforesaid departed soul. Their kith and kin also come there with a bottle of liquor. They perform 'pooja' (worship), eat and drink and the mourning comes to an end.

The Magars observe many festivals. They observe one festival on 'Jyestha' Poornima' (the full moon day in the month of May-June), one on 1st Asadh (July), one on 1st Shraavan (August), one on 1st Bhadra (September) and so on. On 'Jyestha Poornima' they offer newly harvested grains to gods. On 1st Ashadh, early in the morning the Magar youths with a hog go to a hill-top and sacrifice the hog and perform a 'pooja'. In the afternoon they come back to the village and begin singing and dancing. 1st Shraavan is also a great festive day. On this day they make toy animals and implements of floor, worship the cow, eat, drink and make merry. On this occasion it is incumbent on the Magar youths to sing and dance together with the opposite sex. Besides these, they also observe 'Dasain', 'Tihar' and 'Maghe Sankranti' with great festivity

The Thakalis

The Thakalis belong to the Mongoloid stock. Round face, flat nose, high cheek bones, narrow eyes and yellowish complexion give testimony to their Mongoloid features. Most probably they have migrated from Tibet.

They are mostly found in the Thak region of Kali Gandaki Valley. So they are spread around Mustang-Manang area.

The Thakalis are divided into four clans, namely Gauchan, Tulachan, Sherchan and Bhattachan whose clan gods are said to be Dragon, Elephant, Lion and Yak respectively.

They have their own language which is more or less akin to the Tibetan dialects of the Tamangs and Gurungs, ~~though the language of the Thakalis might be of Tibetan origin.~~

The Thakalis are business men by profession and they are one of the most successful traders in Nepal. They are comparatively richer than the other neighbouring tribes. Tukucho Bazar is the main trade centre for the Thakalis. Before the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese, these people used to bring salt



A typical Thakali with costume

to Tukuche from Tibet with the help of animals such as mules and ponies as a means of transport. They used to barter salt against consumer goods such as grains, canvas shoes, cigarettes, kerosine oil etc. that were brought from the southern part by the porters. As their trade with Tibet received a set-back since the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese the Thakalis have receded southwards from Tukuche and the place is now occupied by either Tibetan refugees or northern border people. Still the Thak khola region is mostly occupied by the Thakalis. Some of them do business not only with India and within the country but they also go to Hongkong and Japan for business purposes.

The Thakali women too, are very good at trading. They open a small restaurant and bar with snacks, tea, local 'raksi' (comparable to diluted 'Vodka') etc. Dinner is served in some restaurants and a place to sleep in is also provided.

The Thakalis who are not well off choose agriculture as their profession. One remarkable trait in the character of the Thakalis is that whenever a Thakali falls into a financial crisis, all other Thakalis contribute their mite to ameliorate his financial condition.

Generally Thakalis being rich, they hire labour for crops. Because of lack of enough precipitation, Thak Khola region mainly grows barley and buckwheat.

The Thakalis usually build fairly large size houses with the help of stones with flat roof-tops and courtyards. The interiors are spaciouly built so that they may have enough space for the guests to come during festive occasions.

They are Buddhists by religion and their religion and culture are more or less correspond to those of the Tibetans. The Sanctuary of Muktinath which lies in the north to the Thak Khola region is a holy place for pilgrimage. This is the region where 'Saligram' scientifically what is known as ammonite, is found which is usually picked up by the pilgrims to worship in their respective homes. The holy place is visited both by the Buddhists and the Hindus.

As the Thakalis are affluent, their standard of living is higher than that of many others in similar habitats in Nepal. So, modern Thakalis have, adopted Hinduism and they perform marriage ceremonies and other ceremonies according to the Vedic system of the Hindus.

Cross cousin marriage is in vogue among the Thakalis. That is to say, they can marry their father's sister's daughter or the mother's brother's daughter. Marriage among the Thakalis is usually by abduction though these days arranged marriage is given preference. As is the practice with them a girl whom a boy loves is abducted with the help of the boy's friend and relatives and she is kept concealed till the approval of the girl's parents is obtained. Unless an approval is got, wedding is not complete. In the marriage ceremony both the bride and the groom are put 'tika' mark on their forehead and the groom

is given a two metre piece of linen cloth to wrap his head with as a turban. Both the groom and the bride are then blessed. The Thakalis marry among their own clan and polygamy is not unknown among them .

Divorce can very easily be obtained among the Thakalis. If the husband does not like his wife, he divorces her and the wife thus divorced is married to another man with ceremony.

Generally after marriage elder son or sons go out of their parents' house for their own settlement. So, according to the tribal custom prevalent among the Thakalis the youngest son gets the biggest share when the patrimony is divided.

One of the most significant festivals among the Thakalis at Thak Khola is 'Phafeva' which means in Tibetan language the coming of god. The festival which is celebrated once in twelve years is held sometime in the month of November and lasts for about a week. During the festival the images of four clan gods are worshipped after they are taken out of the temples. They are carried, around with recitals. And the people enjoy themselves in feasting. This is also known as 'Kumbha Mela'- a Hindu festive name. 'Shyoben lava' or Kumar Jatra' is another tribal festival. It is a kind of fair in which most of the young boys take part out of whom some are initiated and trained in riding, singing, dancing, archery and other activities. This practice is, however, slowly dying away. Another festival is the worship of their ancestor-god which is known as 'Dhutingya'. It represents the spirit of all dead ancestors. Two copper jugs with holy water are kept at 'Mhatim', that is the main house of the clans symbolizing the spirit of the deceased ancestors. The ceremony is considered to be very expensive.

The pastime of the Thakalis in the Thak region is to shoot at a target with an indigenous bow and arrows especially in the spring season. The archery tournament is a part of the festival which is annually celebrated on the full moon day of Falgun (sometime in March). It is considered to be the greatest festival of the Thakalis.

A typical Thakali wears 'Labeda' with loose sleeves, 'Surwal', a vest and a Nepali cap. Instead of a cap, he generally wraps his forehead with a scarf. A Thakali woman wears a female Tibetan dress.

The 'Mukhiya' (headman) of the villages in Thak Khola collects grazing taxes from the owners of the sheep, the accounting of which is done in the July session of the high council while other matters are thrashed out in the Tika session of the same council, but with the introduction of the Panchayat system this system is being done away with.

The Musalmans

The Musalmans also come under the Nepalese society. They also form one of the ethnic groups obtained in Nepal. The Muslims are said to have migrated from India to Nepal for the first time in the reign of Ratna Malla sometime in the late 15th . and early 17th. centuries for the purpose of trade. In course of time they settled in Nepal and grew in number.

Of the two main sects of the Muslims - Shiah and Sunni to be found in Nepal, the Sunnis are in greater number.

The Muslims are scattered mainly in Terai region and some ^{are found} ~~could be~~ in the Churia ranges and Mahabharat ranges. They are also found in the Kathmandu Valley.



A Musalman amidst his open shop

The Muslims in the Valley are mostly traders. And those of the hills are also of the same trade. They deal in bangles, glass beads, tassels, washing soap, shoes etc. They are good traders and know the psychology of the customers and they know how to talk politely with the customers to induce them to buy goods in which they are dealing.

Some Musalmans are found to be in the government service.

The Muslims in the Valley and in the Terai speak Urdu but those in the hills, influenced by the language of the area in which they live, speak Nepali.

The Muslims in the Valley and in the Terai put on shirt, pyjama (both loose and tight) and a Turkish cap. They also put on 'lungi' (a sort of loin cloth). But these days they dress themselves as other Nepalese and it is difficult to distinguish them from the Brahmans and the Newars because of their physical features and intonation they adopt.

The Muslims prefer to live in the locality where others of their community live and their women are made to observe 'purda system' though it is fast disappearing in the families of the educated Muslims.

A devout Muslim is supposed to pray three times a day - at dawn, at noon and at sunset. He is also supposed not to take alcoholic drink, not to touch a pig, not to take the meat of goat slaughtered by other than a Musalman and not to practice adultery. The Muslims are very expert in the art of cooking. They know how to prepare delicious dishes and are fond of taking rich food.

A Muslim marriage is generally an arranged marriage. It is arranged by the guardians. The Muslims can marry cross cousins when both the parties agree and contract matrimonial alliance. The boy's father meets the girl's father at the latter's house and the latter makes formal offer which the former accepts in the presence of witnesses. When the formalities of offer and acceptance are over, gifts of food are exchanged between the two families concerned. A wedding day is fixed and on that day the marriage procession headed by the groom starts for the bride's house where the groom's party is welcomed. On the wedding day the groom takes with him clothes and ornaments for the bride. The girl's parents also give her clothes, ornaments and utensils as dowry.

Though monogamy is practiced in the Muslim community, a Muslim can keep three more wives besides his legally married wife if he so chooses. Among the Muslims a wife can very easily be divorced. She can be divorced by uttering 'talak' three times by the husband in the presence of a certain number of witnesses. A Muslim cannot remarry the same wife once divorced by him. Widow marriage and second marriage are not taboo.

When a baby is born, the father or a guardian reads the 'Namaz' (prayer) for the wellbeing of the newly born baby. Religious ceremonies are performed and prayers are recited on the sixth, twentieth and fortieth days after the birth of the baby. The baby and the mother are washed on these occasions.

Muslim boys are circumcised when they reach the age of four to eight.

The Muslims observe a number of festivals, the most important of which are Roza, Muharrum and Id. The Roza festival is observed by fasting and praying. It takes place in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. On this occasion they fast from sunrise to sunset and pray five times a day. During the fast hours they do not even drink water, but they go on doing their daily round of duty. They observe the fasting for a month. When they break the fast, feast is given to friends and relatives and prayers are recited.

Muharrum festival is held to mark the assassination of Imam Hussain, grand-son of Mohammad, the Muslim prophet. It is more jealously celebrated by the Mohammedans of the Shiah sect than those of the Sunni sect. This festival lasts for ten days. It begins with the appearance of the new moon in the sky of the month fixed for its celebration.

Bakra i. e. Id is another important festival of the Muslims. It begins on the tenth day of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar and lasts for three days. During the festival goats are sacrificed and Muslims enjoy feasts. Prayers are also recited during the celebration of the festival.

Every Friday the Muslims go to their respective mosques and pray to Allah - their only God.

The Muslims unlike the Hindus bury their dead bodies. When a Muslim dies, his dead body is washed clean with water and the whole body is rubbed with camphor and perfumes. The corpse is then put in a coffin and is carried to the graveyard, where it is buried. The corpse of the Muslim is followed by a party with shoes and caps on and without wailing.

Mustang

Mustang is a district in the northern part of Dhaulagiri Zone in western Nepal.

Mustang being mountainous, life there is very hard and the fields yield very little produce. Wheat, barley, potatoes and buckwheat are grown in some fields. Besides agriculture the inhabitants of Mustang trade in wool, salt, food grains and silk brokades. They also keep yak for milk and milk preparation, sheep for wool and meat, and mules and donkeys as a means of transportation.

Mustang is inhabited by Kutahs who form the noble class, Shelvas though equal in caste status to the Kutahs, socially not quite as important as the Kutahs and Righins who form the lowest grade in the social status. In other words, people are divided into six classes, two classes being outcaste tribes. The other four classes are the nobles, the monks, the land owning peasants and the landless peasants. Of the two outcaste tribes, one tribe called the Shambars forms the butcher class and the Garas forms the lowest group.

Family life in Mustang is different from that of other districts. As is the practice here, the first son inherits the father's property and the second son becomes usually a monk. The third son who lives with his brother in the same house and works for him also shares his wife. Other brothers also, if any, do the same. Thus the family system and the law of inheritance help to prevent fragmentation of land in a land where cultivable land is limited.

Another characteristic of the family life in Mustang is that the father retires from active life when his eldest son gets married. The eldest son then manages the household affairs at his own responsibility. The young leadership is supposed to be dynamic and enterprising.

People at Mustang are peasants, nomads and merchants at the same time. In the spring season when the weather is fair, they work in their fields. In

summer they roam about with their cattle for grazing. In winter when the rivers are mostly frozen and are easy to cross they go to Tibet or come down to Kathmandu and other districts of Nepal for trade.

Except the house of the king of Mustang, all other houses are two storeyed. Of the two storeys, the ground floor is used for breeding cattle and for storing goods. People live in the first floor. It does not have many windows as they want to keep it warm to protect themselves from cold.

The custom of the people at Mustang is as that of the Tibetans. They wear coarse woollen garments with fur lining. They also wear high-top boots called 'Docha' and decorate themselves with strings of jade and corals.

They observe four religious ceremonies, namely Gienze, Newne, Getsu and Gelung. The first two are observed by laymen and the last two by the monks. All these festivals involve religious vows such as not eating meat, abstaining from sexual intercourse and so on. The religious vows are more for the monks than for the laymen.

In all these festivals they prepare a special kind of edible called Torma. Torma is to be made of flour and butter or ghee. It is artistically made with a base, a circular bulging above it and tapering to a point. These Tormas are distributed as religious offerings to all those who are present on the occasion.

The marriage procedure of the people of Mustang is queer and at the same time unique. When a boy falls in love with a girl, he often meets her rather in secret. When they both attain marriageable age, the boy one night visits the girl's house and knocks at the door and he asks the girl to let him in. If the girl does not like the boy, she does not open the door and there ends the courting; if the girl likes the boy she shouts, 'Go away, go away, within the range of hearing of her father and at the same time she opens the door to let him in. If the father does not like the suitor' he drives him away. But if he likes him, he keeps quiet and that is taken as his tacit consent. The boy and the girl sleep together. Next morning the boy goes to his father and tells him that he slept with so and so's daughter last night and he wanted to marry her. The boy's father then arranges a visit to the girl's parents. As is the practice he goes there with a bottle of 'chang' and tells the girl's parents that his son likes to marry their daughter. The girl's father, however, says that he has to consult his daughter first. He then calls his daughter and asks her whether she really likes the boy or not. If she likes the boy, she blushes and covers her face with her hands and if she does not, she plainly tells him so.

If the girl is willing to marry the boy, next day the girl's father goes to the boy's parents with a bottle of 'chang', and a pot of tea and expresses his consent to the marriage.

The following day the boy and his father go to the girl's house and the father marks the girl's forehead with butter. It indicates that from that day on, she is theirs. The boy at the same time gives the girl's brother a 'khata' (a kind of woven fabric given to some one as ^amark of honour). If the girl has no brother, it is given to her father.

Next day, the boy and his father again go to the girl's house where they drink chang. In the mean time the girl's father asks the boy to behave well to his daughter. The boy's father in reply says that his daughter should behave well and she should not sleep with any other man. From that day on, the boy, if he likes, may stay in the girl's house and sleep with her till the official wedding which may take place after six months or a year.

On an auspicious day fixed by the 'lamas,' the wedding takes place. On the day of wedding the boy's father goes to the girl's house with beautiful clothes and ornaments for the girl. When the bride is dressed, all her friends decorate her with ~~khata~~s while the boy's father fixes an arrow with a tassel in the girl's garment at the back of her neck.

The girl is then taken to the groom's house in a procession followed by the bride's father and that of the groom and other members of the bride's family and a band of drummers and musical instrument players. On the way groups of women will be gathering with bowls of chang. As the bride reaches these groups of women, she dips her finger in the chang and sprinkles it three times around her. When the bride reaches the door of her husband's house, a lama throws rice at her three times. This is done with a view to purifying her and warding off the evil spirits that may have accompanied her. After this when the bride is taken into the house, the mother-in-law gives her turquoise. She is then taken to the first floor by making her walk over a long carpet of red cloth laid down on the ladder.

The bride is then seated beside her husband or husbands if she is marrying a number of brothers and the groom's father takes away the arrow placed at the back of her neck. As is the practice, the bride's maids then sit by the side of the husband and the groom's friends by the side of the bride.

Then comes the meat giving ceremony. The groom's father gives the bride's father the right leg of a sheep carefully wrapped in a 'khata' and the left leg to the bride's mother and other portions of the sheep to other members of the bride's family.

Now it is the bride's father's turn to give his presents and dowry consisting of a number of sheep or yaks or even a field and a horse. He then presents a khata to the groom. After this all the guests present 'khatas' to the newly married couple or trio. The guests are then entertained to a feast in which they eat and drink a lot. Singing and dancing follow the feast. The marriage ceremony is thus concluded.

Baglung

Baglung is the southern most district in the Dhaulagiri Zone.

It is mostly inhabited by the Magars, the Newars and Thakalis. They speak their own dialects, but the dialects of the Magars and the Newars differ from those spoken in other districts.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people here. Some other people engage themselves in some other trades as well. Chhawntel Magars, for example, are expert in quarrying. They quarry slate and trade in them to fill in their requirements. The Thakali women are expert in weaving 'Galaincha' a thick woollen carpet of various designs but of short length), woollen coverings and blankets, 'kamlo' (a kind of woollen outer garment) etc.

Best Nepalese paper known as 'Mandre Tau' lasting for centuries is made here. Another important occupation in which people there engage themselves is the collections of 'Silajit' (asphalt) and 'Shaligram' (sacred black stones supposed to contain gold inside but scientists believe it to be pyrite-fool's gold). Slender bamboo pens and 'Nali' (bamboo pipe of about 12 to 34 inches diameter and about two feet long for smoking on a hooka— a filtering device with the help of water before smoke goes to the smoker. The pipes and the hookas are carved or engraved with various designs to produce different price ranges.

Magar culture seemed to have influenced the culture of other people here. No festival goes unobserved without liquors and chang and singing and dancing. Their Ghatu and other dances are very interesting to look at. People here believe in animism and sacrifice animals to gods and goddesses.

Males in Nishi Bhuji (a place where killing with khukuri by robbers at night used to take place) wear silver bangles triangular gold ornaments about their ears and talismen round their neck and they go about with knives and earpicks. The people of Nishi Bhuji are the most backward in the district.

Wool, herbs, musks, woollen blankets, woollen coverings, woollen carpets, Nepalese paper and slates are exported from Baglung. Sheep, goats and horses are also exported. Cigarettes, matches, cloths, spices, salt, kerosine oil, shoes, household utensils are all imported into the district.

Dolpo

Dolpo is a district in the northern part of the Dhaulagiri Zone in Western Nepal.

This district is inhabited mostly by the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Bhotes, the Magars, the Kamis (blacksmiths), the Damais (tailors) and the Sarkis (cobblers).

Three languages, namely, Nepali, Tibetan and 'Koeke' are spoken in this district. In the northern part of this district, Tibetan is spoken, in the southern part,—Nepali and in the central part— Kaeke.

The people here specially the Bhotes and the Magars are very painstaking. Even when they carry loads on their back, they do not stop spinning.

They have blind faith in 'Jhankris'. They believe that only 'Jhankris' can cure them of diseases.

People in the southern part mostly depend on agriculture, but the method of cultivation being primitive, the produce is low. Phapar (buckwheat), chino Kagoon (a kind of millet), maize, wheat, millet, uwa (barley) and beans are grown here. Rice is also grown in some places. In the northern part of the district, joar, and barley are mostly grown and in the central part, chino, phapar and beans are mostly grown. Potatoes and turnips are also produced. In parts of Jumla where irrigation from the mountain streams is possible, paddies are grown upto an elevation of 10,000 feet above sea level but it takes eight to nine months to ripen them whereas in lower altitudes they ripen in four or five months.

People in the northern part keep yak, 'jhonwa' horses, sheep, goats and donkeys. Ghee, cheese and 'dubookho' etc. are prepared out of the excess of the milk of the yaks.

They put on home-made clothes. All the articles of clothing they need they prepare at home. The woollen blankets, chauripata 'Pheruwa' or 'Lue' are very popular in the Nepali market.

The Bhotes in the northern part of the district wear coarse woollen jackets and pyjamas and tie woollen band round their waist. They also wear necklace of corals or of 'yun' (turquoise). The women also wear almost similar costume, but the married women wear what is called 'pandem' (a kind of garment which is worn below the waist and over and above the inner garment). They also wear bangles of conch. Women other than those of the Brahmans and high caste-Kshatriyas are to be seen wearing 'gado' (an upper garment like a bag to be put on the back), 'Thagar cholo' and 'Maiti Talo' necklace of corals, of gold, of silver coins, silver bangles, glass bangles, 'Chaypte Sun' and tying cotton bands round their waists. Elderly Bhote women of Dolpo put on their heads four rectangular pieces of brass hinged together.

People holding 'Bon' Buddhist and Hindu faiths are found in this district. People holding 'Bon faith' are found mostly in the villages of 'Chharka', 'Baijubara', Ringma and Pungma, but these days the followers of the Bon faith are fast decreasing in number.

Though the whole district has come under the influence of Buddhism, its influence is marked in the northern part. The Bhotes and Magars are the staunch followers of Buddhism. In the southern part of the district the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas follow Hinduism. In the northern part of the district polyandry is still practised.

A penalty of 20 manas of uwa (barley), half a dharni (a little over one kilogram) of ghee, half a dharni of wool and half the quantity of a goat's meat is imposed upon one man who rapes a married woman or a maiden and a baby is born thereby. If the baby is a male, it belongs to the father and it cannot be owned by the raper without the permission of the former husband, but if the baby happens to be a female child, it belongs to the mother. But with regard to the issue born of a maiden thus raped, it depends on the will of the maiden as well as the maiden's parents. But this practice, is now, confined to a limited circle.

Whosoever wants divorce on some or other cause has to pay Rs. 80/-, Rs. 100/- or Rs. 110/- as determined by the village council to the counter part.

Among the Bhotes there is also the practice of keeping a son-in-law at home instead of sending their daughter to the son-in-law's house. In such a case the girl's parents first of all go to the would-be son-in-law's house and ask the parents for the boy. If they agree, the girl's parents take the girl to the house of the would-be son-in-law and the girl catches hold of the boy's hand and asks him to go to her house. Others, also, help the girl in taking the boy home. When they reach home, they are married to each other.

Jumla Humla Mugu and Tibrikot

Jumla, Humla, Mugu and Tibrikot lie in the Karnali Zone. All these four districts in this zone are mountainous. Jumla and Humla are inhabited mostly by the Kshatriyas and the Thakuries and Mugu and Tibrikot by the people of the Tibetan stock.

Maize, millet and barley are grown in these places. At higher altitudes, people keep yak and grow tite phapar. Potatoes and radishes are also produced. Fruits such as apples, peaches, citrus, pomegranates, walnuts and grapes are grown at Jumla.

The inhabitants of these districts, namely Jumla, Humla, Mugu and Tibrikot also deal in horses, herbs, drugs and woollen goods.

Gold, beryl, mica, copper and sulphur are found at different places in these districts.

The Matwali Chhetris

The Matwali Chhetris like other Kshatriyas are also Hindus by religion but since they are Matwali (i.e. one who drinks liquor), socially they are not supposed to occupy the same status as the Kshatriyas who are not as Matwalis do. They are looked down upon by other Kshatriyas. They do not wear 'janai' (sacred thread) as other kshatriyas do.

These Matwali Chhetris are mostly found in and around Jumla, particularly in the villages of the south-eastern part of Jumla in the Bheri Zone in western Nepal.

Bohara, Buro, Basnet, Rokaysa, Thapa, Raul, Bhandari, Khadga, Raut, Mahatara are some of the clans into which the Matwali Chhetris are divided.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Matwali Chhetris. They grow mainly maize, wheat, millet, potato, buckwheat and paddy in some places where irrigation is possible. They sell their surplus food grains to buy other necessities of their life. They also trade in medicinal herbs.

They live in two or three storeyed houses made of stone, timber and mud and having flat roofs on them. The ground floor is used as an enclosure for the cattle. The other storeys are used for living purposes. They consist of store-room, sitting room, kitchen and bed room.

A Matwali Chhetri usually wears a 'Topi' (a Nepali cap), 'Kochhya' (a kind of cloak), 'Janghelo' (Nepali pyjama), 'Pauro' (waist band) and a jacket. He wears a pair of 'Locha' (hightop boots) to walk on snow. All these articles of clothing are made of home spun wool.

The females wear a skirt of 'Thetua' (a coarse cloth), blouse, 'dautho' (a cotton stole locally printed) and a 'ghumcho' (a veil) made of rough wool. They decorate themselves with nose rings, earrings, necklaces of coins or glass beads and glass bangles.



A Matwali Chhetri Woman with her children at Mahri Gaon, Jumla district of Nepal

Courtesy: Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

child, a 'nuharan' ceremony is performed. No special ritual attends the ceremony. It is celebrated by giving feast to the villagers and the kinsmen.

The Matwali Chhetris also perform the 'Bratabandha' ceremony (something like the tonsure ceremony). In this ceremony, they do not have to wear the sacred thread, nor do they have to make a vow to refrain themselves from taking alcoholic drink and chicken, but the initiation entitles the boy to worship his family deities and to perform the funeral rites on the death of his father or mother. This 'Bratabandha' ceremony is performed at the age of six at the earliest and before marriage at the latest. In all these ceremonies they rarely seek the service of a Brahman priest.

The Matwali Chhetris have their own marriage procedure. Negotiation for the bride starts at an early stage. When the marriage proposal is accepted by the bride's party, some presents are sent to the bride's family by way of securing the betrothal. After two or three years some more presents consisting of 'Tatyas'

The social structures of the Matwali Chhetris is more or less patterned after that of other castes. Only sons reserve the right to patrimonial property. If a man dies issueless, the right of inheritance to his property passes on to the nearest kinsmen. If he has only a daughter to succeed him, he can marry her to a boy and make the boy stay with him in his house for ever. Such a groom inherits the clan name of the girl and also her parental property but he forfeits his claim to his father's property.

On the ninth day from the birth of a

(a kind of sweet prepared from wheat flour and walnut oil) and clothes to the female members in the bride's family are sent to the bride's house. This is known as 'Arni khwaunu'. Some two or three years after this presentation, wedding takes place. The 'Dhami' fixes an auspicious day for the wedding.

On the wedding day a procession headed by a local musical band is taken out from the groom's house. It is not attended by the groom. Another peculiarity of the marriage of the Matwali Chhetris is that the invitees who attend the marriage procession are entertained in the bride's house at the cost of the groom. Goats, rice and alcoholic drinks are sent to the bride's house in the morning of the day of the marriage procession. Next morning the groom's party is entertained by the villagers in the bride's village. In the afternoon the bride is sent away with the procession after her feet have been washed by her parents, brothers and other near relatives. When the bride reaches the groom's house in the evening, a goat is killed. She is then taken into the house and certain rituals are performed. Both the groom and the bride are seated together. A 'Kalasha' (a waterpot) with a burning lamp on it is placed in front of the couple. The couple then throws rice flour at each other and the people who are present there shout, 'They are married ! They are married !' The couple go round the 'Kailasha' seven times and after that the 'Sindhur-halne' ceremony (i.e. the ceremony of applying vermilion powder on the hair-parting of the bride) takes place. The marriage ceremony is thus concluded.

Marriage among the Matwali Chhetris is also contracted by what is known as 'jari' (i.e. elopement with some one's wife or with a betrothed girl). When a marriage is thus contracted, the new husband has to pay compensation to the former husband, the amount of compensation varying from Rs. 2000/ to Rs. 2500/—, depending upon the bargaining power of the contending parties. When the former husband comes to the new husband to receive compensation, the former (husband) has got to be entertained by the latter with goat's meat and rice. If the new husband cannot pay the compensation immediately, a loan is raised in his village to help him. No interest is charged on such loan.

A husband can bring a second wife if he wants to, but he has to pay compensation to his first wife. The first wife is free to find a new husband for herself. In case she marries a new husband, the former husband cannot make any claim to compensation from the new husband.

When a Matwali Chhetri dies, he is either cremated or buried or thrown into a river. The mourning period varies from three to thirteen days. The day on when the mourning period comes to an end, all the male members of the bereaved family and the near relatives of the deceased shave their heads, wash themselves and sprinkle cows urine on their bodies to purify themselves. During the mourning period the son of the deceased cooks his own food, does not take

salt and sleep on bed. At the end of the mourning period, a community feast is arranged. Charitable acts as building a Dharmashala or going on a pilgrimage are performed for the betterment of the soul of the deceased.

The Matwali Chhetris worship a number of divinities. The divinities have however no images to represent them. Only a bronze bell is attached to the shrines dedicated to them. It is believed that the divinity is manifested in a human form in a 'Dhami'. The 'Dhami' is supposed to act as a go-between ^{between} God and man. When he is possessed by divinity, he is supposed to speak for the divinity on the past, present and future. The 'Dhami' to distinguish himself from other persons grows a long tuft of hair. When the 'Dhami' is possessed, the 'Dhangu'-the priest and care-taker of the shrine offers him rice and the 'Dhami' gives 'Tika' to the 'Dhangu' and all those present there. The offices of the Dhami and the the Dhangri are hereditary.

The Matwali Chhetris observe three main festivals in a year— the 'Tika' festival of the Dasain, the 'Maghe Sankranti' festival and the 'Srawane' 'Sankranti' festival. They observe the 'Tika' festival in a different way. The junior members of the family offer 'Tika' to the head of the family and not vice versa which is followed by the other ethnic groups. The first person to offer 'Tika' is the wife of the head of the family and other juniors follow suit. While offering 'Tika' they express their best wishes and kindest regards to the head of the family.

Another festival is the Maghe festival. It is observed on the first day of the month of Magh (January-February). On this day married daughters and sisters are invited to their father's house and are given feast. Presents of cloths and ornaments are also made to them.

The third festival is celebrated on the first day of the month of Sravana (July-August). In this festival, small fire is lit in the evening and a piece of burning firewood is hurled towards the neighbouring village, wishing that itching disease be spread to that village and not to their village.

The Matwali Chhetris with their own ways of living, religion and social structure form a distinct ethnic group.

Bajura

Bajura is a district which lies in the Seti Zone in western Nepal. It is inhabited mostly by the Kshatriyas, the Thakuris, the Brahmins, the Kamis, the Damais, the Sarkis, Badi and Churante represent the minority groups of the district. Along with Bajurali - the local language, Nepali language is spoken all over the region.

Though agriculture is the main occupation of the people here, people at higher altitudes engage themselves in cottage industries. They make 'doko', 'mandro'. 'bhakari' (a network of bamboos for storing grains) and weave blankets and woollen coverings. 'Bhang' (hemp) is mostly cultivated in higher altitudes. Out of the plant they extract fibre and weave a coarse cloth. Out of the plant they also extract 'chares' (hashish). They fry the seeds and take them. Sometimes they extract oil by pressing the seeds.

The farmers keep cattle and bees too. Walnuts are other forest products of the district.

The living standard of the people here is very low.

At high altitudes, houses are built low because of extreme cold. No windows are put except a small door. All the houses are made of stones with clay cement and slates are used for roofing. In some places near Jumla, houses are without roofs.

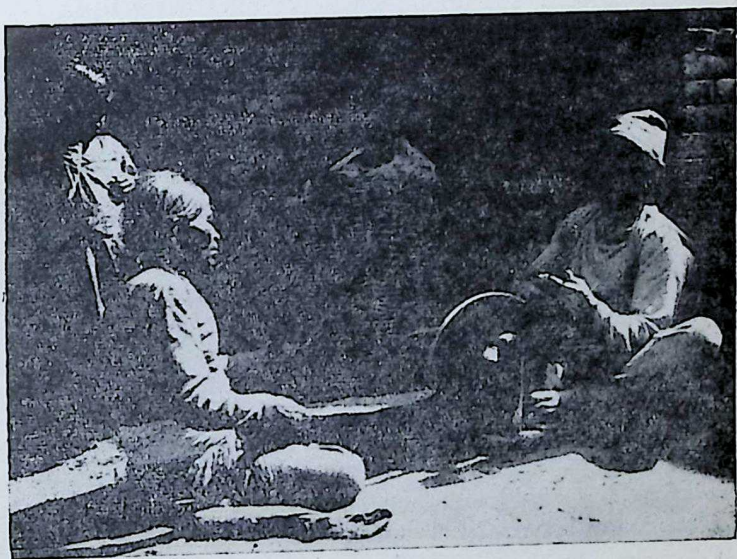
Costumes differ to suit different climatic conditions. At higher altitudes, women wear 'dhotis' of sack-cloth, and the males also wear 'daura' and 'surwal' and coats of sack-cloth. They put on cotton clothes only on the festive occasions. Machine-made clothes are being greatly used these days. Women in Dogadi, Thuwadanda and Jarinetola wear frocks.

Almost all the people here being Hindus, they perform their religious rites and ceremonies according to the Hindu scriptures. Even in the festivals, Dasain, Tihar, Basanta-Panchami, Janai Poornima are celebrated with greater pomp and

enthusiasm they have their local festivals as well. In one such festival the young men and women form themselves into a circle and circumambulate as they sing songs and rejoinders. This is known as 'Deauda'.

Blind belief is rampant among the people at Bajura. If a man falls ill, the help of a 'Jhankri' (a man who practises animism) is sought. Even disputes are settled by the Jhankris. In almost every village there is a temple called 'Madu' and every 'Madu' has a 'Dhami' attached to it. Horses are also dedicated to some 'Madus' and only Dhamis have the privilege to ride these horses. Dhamis are dressed in white. They also wear a white Pagari (turban). The Dhamis seem to have won the confidence and faith of all the villagers. If they have some grievances, they go to the temple and in the presence of the Dhami complain to God. The Dhami on behalf of the god fixes the day when the complainant is to appear before the god again. The defendant and witnesses are also summoned. Rice grains are sent by way of summons. After hearing the case all concerned find judgement given. If the parties involved are not satisfied, they appeal to other Madu.

Ghee, herbs, blankets and coverings are sold at Rajapur, Dhangadhi and Mahendranagar. Whereas tobacco, chillis, sack-cloth, mattresses made of reed are sold in the neighbouring countries, consumer goods for household uses are purchased out of the money they have made from their products. They include mainly kerosine oil, oil, salt, sugar candy, spices, cloth, cigarettes and utensils etc.



Kami couple whetting a 'Khukuri'

Bajhang

Bajhang is a district in the Seti Zone in mid-western Nepal. It is under a vassal ruler known as Bajhangi Raja. This system has been abolished now.

This district is mostly inhabited by the Kshatriyas and the Brahmans besides Newars, the Damais, the Dhobis and the Sarkis. In the northern part of the district there are Matwali Chhetris (the Chhetris who drink liquor) and they also keep poultry, while in the southern part there are non-Matwali Kshatriyas. They do not drink liquor and keep poultry. The Matawali Chhetris are called 'Bora', Budhathoki etc. The Bora Chhetris procure licence to cultivate hemp from which they extract 'charesh' (Hashish) and the fibre is used to make clothes.

Bajhange Bhasa is the usual language the Bajhang people speak. But they do speak Nepali language too.

Most of the people here are superstitious and traditionalist. Members of one tribe do not take the rice cooked by the members of the other tribe in as much as they do not even drink the water touched by a member of the other tribe. Excepting the Brahmans, the members of other tribes do not take the rice cooked by their females. Male members therefore cook the rice and only bread is prepared by the female members. In order to take rice, they put on a dhoti (a white piece of garment of about 12 feet long and about 36 inch wide with dark border.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in this region. Besides agriculture they also keep themselves busy in small scale industries. They make 'doko'(a Nepali basket to be carried on the back), mattresses and weave cloth and woollen blankets. 'Charesh' is also manufactured here. Bee keeping is also practised for the extraction of honey. Cobblers make shoes from the leather of an ox and a buffalo. The sarkis tan deer skin and turn it into suede.

Pig raising is the exclusive business of the Damais and Kamis. The Kamis and the Sunwars work on metals.

The ladies wear saris and blouse but mostly they wear 'gauns' the length of which varies from seven metres to fourteen metres. They cover their heads with a separate piece of cloth like a scarf and tie their waist with a waist band. They decorate themselves with all sorts of ornaments as silver bangles, silver anklets, glass bangles, a string of Indian silver coins, earrings, necklace of glassbeads with an ingot of gold in front, nose rings, gold head-dress.

The males on the other hand wear shirts, pyjamas, waist-coat, coat, guernsey, Nepalese cap and trousers.

The people of Bajhang celebrate Dasain and Tihar festivals with great pomp and grandeur. They also celebrate Baisakh First— the new year's Day with great festivity. On that day most of them get up early in the morning and look up at the sky to have a feeling of a "Happy New Year". During Dasain, they receive Tikas from their superiors and make obeisance to them. Tihar festival is also observed according to Hindu religion. During festivals, they sing songs and extracts from scriptures are recited and divine plays are dramatized. Traditional games as 'Bhuwa', 'Bhailo', 'Bhari' are also played.

They believe that will bring them good luck. After that they wash themselves, take their meals and worship with a new staff. Using that staff as a walking stick they go to the main place in the village where they paint a long branch of a sal tree and sing a song called 'Deoda'.

People here are the followers of Sanatan Hinduism. Bratabandha ceremony, marriage ceremony and other ceremonies are all performed strictly according to the religious rites of the Hindus. Such festivals as Krishnastami, Ramnawami, the Shivaratri, Ekadashi are all observed with great pomp.

Darchula

Darchula lies in the Mahakali Zone western Nepal. It is in the north-west frontier of Nepal.

It is mostly inhabited by the Brahmans, the Thakuris, the Kshatriyas and the Byansis. Besides Kumao, a mixed dialect of Nepali and Hindi, Nepali is also spoken here.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. The Byansa Garkha spin wool and make 'Galaincha', 'Pakhi' (a woollen covering), mattresses and baskets of reeds. Rice, paddy, wheat, barley, cloth, utensils are exported to Tibet from this district and salt, wool, sheep and musk are imported here from Tibet. Ghee, foodgrains, goats, herbs are all exported to India and cloth and other necessities of life are imported from India.

Darchula is famous for its small scale industries and walnut forest. Galaincha, pakhi, rhadi (woollen blankets of different qualities) are manufactured in this district. They have a good market. The other products of this region are molasses, 'doko', 'mandro', otto (scent) etc.

The Brahmans, The Thakuris and the Kshatriyas observe all their customs and usages strictly according to the injunctions laid down in Hindu scriptures, but the Byansis living in Byansa Garkha observe their customs and usages in their own way. Their system of marriage is also different. The suitor chooses his own lady love. They do not marry each other ~~well and~~ till they know that they really love each other. After they have developed love between them, the suitor keeps her in his house for a week, after which both of them go to the girl's house where they make a feast with goat's meat and drink. This is supposed to end up the marriage.

Dhabala Badarni, Mityu Pooja, Kuldeba Pooja are some of the main festivals of the Byansis while the Brahmans, the Thakuris and the Kshatriyas

observe other local festivals as 'Gohora Pooja' "Maghe Sankranti", Shrawan Sankranti' and 'Chaitrashtami'. During the festival of Gohora Pooja, all the boys and the girls, men and women are smartly dressed up with new clothes. About a month before the commencement of the festival, both men and women start singing songs by tying their hands.

The Byansis like the nomads often move from one place to another in search of pastures for their horses which they breed and sell.

Baitadi

Baitadi is one of the western most district in the Mahakali Zone. It is usually inhabited by the Brahmans, and the Kshatriyas and the Kamis.

The farmers grow mostly 'uwa' (a kind of barley). It is similar to wheat but it does not taste as real wheat. The poorer sections of the people here live on it.

Baitadi is famous for 'chakura' (partridges or fire eaters), ghee (clarified butter) prepared from the milk of the buffaloes, shilajit (asphalt), Nepali paper, wool, herbs and 'Khukuri' (a kind of scimitar).

Copper, iron and lead mines are found in the district. Stones are quarried and they are nicely cut and used for building purposes.

The Kamis (blacksmiths) are called 'kolho' in this district, Kumalhes (potters), and 'sarkis' are known as 'Bhat' and 'Bhool' respectively. A class of Harijans known as Pahari is found to be very expert in sculpture.

One peculiar characteristic of the people at Baitadi is that though the members of a family are separated, they build houses attached to the main house. Long houses seen at Baitadi are the houses of the members of the same family partitioned.

The people at Baitadi look upon marriage as an indispensably necessary act of life. A man who is not married and is issueless is looked down upon in the society. A man usually marries a woman belonging to his own community.

A class of Harijans (untouchables) known as 'Lawad' is in charge of a temple called 'Niglashayani' temple. They are not debarred from worshipping the deity. In Kathmandu too, there are some temples such as Lumari (Bhadrakali) temple, Indrayani (Lunti), Shobha Bhagabati etc. where untouchables can freely enter and the temples themselves are in their charge.

Dadeldhura

Dadeldhura is another district in the westernmost part of Nepal. It is also in the Mahakali Zone.

Though this district is mostly inhabited by the Brahmans, the Thakuris and Kshatriyas and the Damais are found in greater number. The Thakuris are predominant. Next to them are the Bista, Maharas and Deupaj. Then come Madala and Dhami. Nayak or Deuka stand last in order of precedence in the structure of the society.

Females in this district are seen wearing long shirts, and shirt-like blouses. They apply Tika from their fore-head down to the tip of their noses. Males on the other hand put on a pointed cap and wear a shirt and a special kind of waist coat.

Their language is also very much influenced by the language of the adjoining district of India.

Among the Kshatriyas there is a strange usage of selling their daughters to the Thakuris, and the Brahmans with a view to gaining heaven must have dedicated their daughters in the name of gods and goddesses but later on they must have refused to dedicate their own daughters but as they could not wholly disregard the practice they must have started the practice of buying daughters from some poor Chhetrias and dedicating them in the name of deities. These girls are known as 'Debaki' or 'Debadasaki'.

As the tradition stands, these girls dedicated in the name of gods and goddesses cannot marry formally and they usually lead the life of a prostitute. Children born of such women also become attendants of a deity - 'Debako' if a male child is born and 'Debaki' if a female child is born. Since they lead the life of a prostitute, the children cannot claim to have a legally recognised father. Doti the adjoining district to the east is also in the grip of this evil practice of 'Debaki'. Evil as is this

practice, it still persists. With the passage of time and enlightened public opinion, this practice, it is hoped, will come to a complete stop.

Dadeldhura with its sal trees, mica and stone quarries is a rich district. It is also rich in fruits. Oranges, bananas, pomegranates, apples, lemons and stone berries are grown here in plenty.

Most of the people here keep themselves busy in agriculture and in winter, some come down to Kanchanpur towards south in the Terai region to seek some other temporary jobs.

Dadeldhura ^{dwellers are} ~~is~~ also famous for their folk dance and folk songs. They have a kind of dance known as 'Hudke Nach' (Hudke dance). The beating of a 'damaru' (a small leather covered drum) accompanies this dance.

Appendix

When we try to put the different ethnic groups into different geographical regions, roughly we can say that the Upper Himalayas have been the main home land of the Bhotias. Their language and culture are influenced by those of the Tibetans. Some Newars have also settled there for trade and commerce.

Newars, Tamangs, Sunwars, Kirantis, Limboos and Rais are mostly found in the eastern part of the Lower Himalayas, and the western part is mostly inhabited by the Newars, Gurungs, Magars, Ranas, Thakuris, Gorkhalis, Dotyals, Jumlis, Humlis & c. The Newars form the bulk of the population in the Kathmandu Valley.

The inner Terai is mostly inhabited by the Majhis and the Danuwars. In the Terai we mostly find Bajis and the Tharus. Charkos Jhadi i. e. the forest belt of Terai is mostly occupied by the Tharus. The Rajbanshis live in East Jhapa. The Newars are also scattered in the eastern and western parts of Nepal.

There are as many languages as there are ethnic groups in Nepal. Those living in the Upper Himalayan region mostly speak Tibetan and Thaksi and in the Lower Himalayan region Tamang, Limboo, Rai and Kiranti language are mostly spoken.

In the western part of the Lower Himalayas, Gurung, Magar, Dotyal, Jumli and Humli are mostly spoken though Nepali is also spoken by these ethnic groups to communicate themselves to one another.

Since the Newars form the bulk of the population in the Kathmandu Valley, Newari is mostly spoken along with Nepali which is the court language. Variations have, however, crept in the Newari language. So the Newari spoken in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Palpa, Pokhara, Nuwakot, Dailekh, Dolkha etc. differ a little in intonation and terminology.

Though Hindi is the common language of the Terai people, they have their own languages, as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Rajbanshi, Tharu etc.

In Nepal, people are at liberty to profess any religious beliefs unless and until the peace of the country is thereby disturbed. People here take pride in the observance of the religious tenets of their respective religion rather than in their breach. The lives of the people here are rather regulated by the prescriptions and injunctions of their respective religions. Their religions reflect in their ways of living and even in their ideas and ideals.

Though Nepal is a land of different religions, people are so tolerant to one another that they respect the religious beliefs of other sects rather than look down upon them. The Hindus worship and venerate the cow. The Muslims too as a mark of respect to Hinduism and also in observance of the law of the country do not kill the cow, though beef eating is not forbidden in their religion.

The Hindus regard the Buddha as the ninth incarnation of God and they also worship and venerate the Buddha. They go to the Buddhist Temples and the Buddhists too go to the Hindu Temples. A keen observer will see an image of the Buddha or some other signs of Buddhism even in Hindu Temple. Even in the worship of Pashupati Nath, Buddhist emblems are used. On the occasion of Balachaturdasi even Buddhists go to Pasupati to circumambulate the labyrinths of 108 Shivalingas. Buddhism and Hinduism have, thus, in a way perfectly blended in this country. This is more so on the Tantric aspects of both Buddhism and Hinduism. Both the Hindus and the Buddhists have been living in perfect harmony and tolerance.

Buddhism, especially the Mahayana form is mostly prevalent in the Valley, in the northern and eastern hilly regions. Hinduism is prevalent in the Valley, western hilly regions and the Terai. Muslims are sparsely scattered in almost all parts of Nepal.

Most of the hilly tribes which are uncultured and unrefined believe in Animism.



SOME OTHER BOOKS OF TOURISTS' INTEREST:

1. Festivals in Nepal.
2. Picturesque Kathmandu.
3. The History of Ancient and Mediaeval Nepal in a Nutshell with some comparative traces of Foreign History, Book I.
4. The History of Modern Nepal in a Nutshell with some comparative traces of Foreign History, Book II (in the Press)